CONCLUDING IN THIS ISSUE: THE MAJOR NEW NOVEL BY

BRIAN ALDISS
FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND

May
1974

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Science Fiction & Fantasy STORIES

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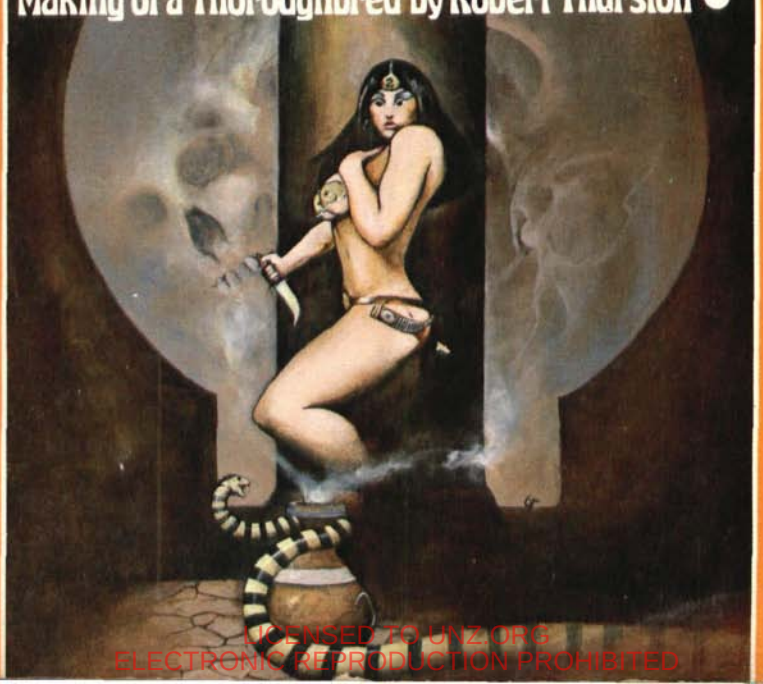

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- One user summoned a man to her — out of thin air!
- Another actually saw behind walls and over great distances!
- A man gained the power to hear the unspoken thoughts of others!

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ALL STORIES NEW—NO REPRINTS

MAY, 1974 Vol. 23, No. 4

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TED WHITE

editorial

ART DIRECTIONS: Periodically I get letters of the following types. rather than quote any one of them in full, I'll summarize them here:

'I am an artist and I would like to contribute to your magazines. How do I go about doing this?'

'I'm confused. Occasionally you refer to cover designs as though you, Mr. White, were responsible for them. But I see on your contents page that J. Edwards is your Art Director. What does *he* do? For that matter, what do *you* do?'

'Who is responsible to all the type that clutters up your covers?'

'Here are some samples of my art work. It's much better than the stuff you print, so why don't you use me?'

'Why don't your covers ever go with any of the stories? I don't think that's fair.'

RATHER THAN TRY to answer these questions individually, I propose to deal with them here and hope that a substancial number of those of you who have asked them, or might ask them, will find this editorial a satisfying answer.

Let's start with an explanation of what really goes on here in the Art Department.

To begin with, there is no Art Department, unless you want to count the drafting table in my basement. FANTASTIC (like its sister magazine, AMAZING SF) is the work of a very few people, each of us operating out of our homes in order to cut down on the overhead expense of office-rental and the like. (Commuting times, too—no small advantage in these times of energy shortages.) And, I none-too-blushingly confess, there is no "J. Edwards," although the name has been around in one permutation or another for twenty years now. Jay Edwards is a name I've used in one capacity or another since, as a young teenager, I became a science fiction fan. His debut was in the pages of my first fanzine, where he signed a column of startlingly brief book reviews. As "Jacob Edwards" he enjoyed a brief life of his own as the publisher of one or two issues of his own fanzine, a short-lived hoax which I also perpetuated upon an uncaring world in my

(cont. on page 116)

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THERE are some things that cannot be generally told—*things you ought to know*. Great truths are dangerous to some—but factors for *personal power* and *accomplishment* in the hands of those who understand them. Behind the tales of the miracles and mysteries of the ancients, lie centuries of their secret probing into nature's laws—their amazing discoveries of *the hidden processes of man's mind*, and *the mastery of life's problems*. Once shrouded in mystery to avoid their destruction by mass fear and ignorance, these facts remain a useful heritage for the thousands of men and women who privately use them in their homes today.

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Robert Thurston's stories have appeared in The Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction, *a number of anthologies, and, most recently, the August, 1973,* AMAZING SF *(with "Up Against the Wall," which, Bob tells us, has been selected for republication in a textbook . . .). The story which follows is remarkable for its compression and implications, although it is ostensibly a–*

SOUNDTRACK: THE MAKING OF A THOROUGHBRED

ROBERT THURSTON

Illustrated by RICHARD OLSEN

NESTLED IN this lush green valley is the glamor capital of the racing world, Bringem Downs. Here, on this dirt track circling a beflowered dacron landscape is run the grueling race known affectionately to all track fans as The Derby.

And today is Derby Day. See the entrants mill about the starting gate. These young men are the pick of the crop, best of the litter. For only the top thoroughbreds can compete in The Derby.

Now all bets have been placed. Anxiously the racers await the starting gun. The starter, his gun raised, sends a peering look down the line. Slowly the trigger is squeezed. . .

And they're off!

SKIMMING THROUGH the dust cloud stirred by their own pumping feet, quickly gathering into a clump by the rail, the racers speed down the track. At the beginning the dozen competitors run toe to heel, fist to elbow. Only one of these fine, superbly-muscled creatures will take the trophies in this awe-inspiring Dash to Glory.

But The Derby is only the end of a long road of hard training, determination, and the will to win. A small percentage of humans travel that road all the way to the end, only the best bear the mark of the breed.

How does a human successfully

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travel the long road to The Derby? Well, let me tell you. For I am human and my name is Arnold-called-the-Super. That's me you see now, running fourth in The Derby as we round the first turn.

Let me tell you about the making of a thoroughbred.

IT ALL BEGAN in this small stable. Here I am, cuddled in my mother's arms. Isn't Mother lovely? I inherited my perfect teeth from her. And here's my trainer, Scaly Joe. See him spread the toes of my feet, test the girth of my chubby little legs. Here's my father, his face taut as he prays silently that he might be the progenitor of a champion. (In his youth Father had dreamed of racing in The Derby, but a weak eye caused a tendency for him to veer to the right, and so he was out of the running early.) Now our master's faith in my father's genetic line is about to pay off, as Scaly Joe turns to Dad and tells him his son has thoroughbred potential. Those are tears of joy in Dad's eyes.

Thoroughbreds must start training early. And so it was with me and Scaly Joe, out every morning before dawn for calisthenics and exercise runs. Joe is a fine trainer, with the sharpest nose for humanflesh in the business. And he is *tough*. If he says to lift your knees higher each step, you do it. If he says to lean in toward the rail on turns, you strain every

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muscle to accomplish the command. If he says to lower your head on the straightaways, you push your chin against your chest and try your best. Try! That's the main value Joe injects into every racer he trains. If you don't try, you don't win. And if you don't win, you clean stable on Derby Day.

Here I am at four years old, an eager but clumsy colt. See how my sloppy execution forces my legs to work harder, makes me huff and puff before I've run three miles.

Many have asked what prerequisites are most necessary for the development of a thoroughbred. Certainly, next to diligent and proper training, the correct diet is important. Here is Joe tying the feedbag on me. That grin on my face as I munch away is the smile of gratitude for a considerate master who spares no expense keeping his trainees contented. Our farm is a happy one. I might add that our master, the keenest breeder of champions on the entire planet, is proud of the fact that his operation was never touched by one of those ugly Racer-Uprisings which, in bygone days, threatened to block the continuance of a sport designed only to cultivate fine bodies and healthy minds. See the slogan at our farm's gate which, translated from our master's tongue, reads: "Whips for wild animals, affection for gentle humans."

Here's Mother waiting for me at the exercise track. Doesn't Mother's beauty shine? I inherited my bearing of pride from her. Here we all are, sitting around our stall for a family evening together. Dad always smiled at me like that. He was a great inspiration during my formative years, teaching us especially what he termed the virtues and comforts of obedience. We all miss him now that he's been put out to greener pastures. See my brother Jack-called-the-Jumper and I indulge in a bit of humanplay, cuffing and nudging under Mother's approving gaze. Jack almost brought home a first in The Steeplechase; he stumbled and fell into the pit on the last hurdle. We all miss him.

And here's Rhonda-called-the-Skitterish come to wish me good luck in my first trials. They say I may be bred to Rhonda when my racing days are over. Jack likes her, really. He just sticks his tongue out at her because that's part of the racer's code. No fillies during the formative years, that's the rule. Good racers have broken stride because of a single shameful thought. So at this time Rhonda and I must be satisfied with, as the saying goes, a handshake in the hay. You can see in her eyes that Rhonda wishes for more, but she's not the kind of gal who would rope a racer by the ankles while he's still running.

Now the day dawns for my first time trials, where the training, the diet, the family affection

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begin to pay off. Ended now is the time for fun, the scampers across green fields, the friendly tussles with other trainees. It's time to get down to business, time to take the first giant step in the making of a thoroughbred. One of our philosophers once said we're all racers on the long dirt track of life. For some the finish line is drawn in the starting gate. For others it's a stumble halfway down the line. But for the few who make it, it's the ultimate proof of the order of the universe. Something to think about, certainly.

As I march onto the turf for my first dress parade before those milling thousands, I wonder if the years of training have perhaps been wasted on a youth of my callowness. I feel fear. Maybe one of the handicappers will criticize my breeding—say that's no throughbred, that's a candidate for the candle factory. What am I doing here? I ask myself. They say that all racers feel that way the first time out.

But then I see Mother leaning against a guard rail, cheering me on, confidence in her eyes. Farther up the track, there's Scaly Joe, calmly sending me thoughts of encouragement. And Dad and Jack and Rhonda, all on my side. Then I know that I've been well trained and can go all the way so long as I keep my courage. Courage is what sets us apart, it's the brand of the racer.

And here I am, bringing it all home by at least ten lengths. Look at the light streaks gleam on my sweating torso, see my face muscles strain against the wind. For the first time I believed I had the stuff to win the Great Race —the race that is run every night in a racer's dreams—The Derby. I vowed that, if I got all the way to The Derby and lost, I would then walk proudly into the candle factory without a single line of a master's whip on my body.

Now Joe really gets down to business. Physically I have to put out double, *triple* my previous efforts. Here I am bicycling to develop extra muscles in the thighs. And swimming, to keep my body trim and firm. Tightrope walking, for that sense of balance that comes in so handy on a tight turn. Practicing body rolls so that I can recover from that dreaded scourge of racing, the stumble and fall. Coordination rituals, I have to run at whatever target pops out of the ground. This exercise helps me to spot the big opening when it occurs during a race. Classroom training, where Joe teaches me the math for calculating distances. And the big moment of every day, the timed run around the track. Joe insists that I shave at least a millisecond off my previous day's run. If I don't, I hear vituperation from Joe in the language of his race, chilling words that shake a racer down to his callused heels. Joe is inspiration to me all the way. Without him and my own prayers, I know I would have stumbled at the first turn. Like

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they say, there are no atheists in the starting gate of The Derby.

And here's Mother again, sitting benignly in the shadows of the entrance ramp. Her loyalty and encouragement helped me to obtain the mental set so necessary to a racer's success. Isn't she stunning? I inherited my deep flaring blue eyes from her. That's Uncle Charley-called-the-Horny standing beside her. He came to the stable after Dad crossed the final finish line. Our master, ever thoughtful, meant to breed him with Mother. However, she —according to our ancient custom—invoked the Courtship Ritual, which required Charley to undergo extensive premarital trials, such as moonlight walks, flower-sending, and a specified period of Going Steady, before an Engagement could be begun. Here they are presenting the breeding certificates to the Pastor, again according to an age-old custom. Mother pretends that there are genetic obstacles to their mating, but that is just her little joke. Even her tears are part of the Ritual, her way of reminding Charley of the Code of the Stud, which too many of our men honor in name only. I know that, if I am admitted to Studhood, I will follow the dictates of the Code down to the last letter of the last sentence of the last instruction for the last position.

And here's Rhonda come for a special visit to the exercise track on the day of the final workout before The Derby. See our master carry her in and set her down in the center of the bleachers. Rhonda has been selected to serve in the master's Manor House, an honor accorded to a select few, but one jealously competed for by our womenfolk. See how lovely she looks in a modest sable coat, provided by the master as a token of faithful service. Her encouragement inspires me, and I set a new personal record in that morning's heat.

But now training days are over. Scaly Joe says he's done all he can do, the rest is up to me.

NO WORDS can capture the thrill of entering Bringem Downs, the Home of The Derby, for the first time. Could this be real? I thought. Joe nudges me in the flanks as if to say of course it's real—only thoroughbreds may pass through the racer's entrance of Bringem Downs.

In the stables I meet my competitors. Here they wave and smile at me as I come through the door. And they were always like that for the few brief days we were together: friendly, smiling, modest, never showing that each had his heart desperately set on winning The Derby. A great bunch of guys by anybody's odds. Here's my special friend, Tony-called-the-Gentle, posing with his arms around me, starting an impromptu bit of humanplay. Hard to believe that soon we'll all be

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opposed to each other in a ferocious struggle. But that's the name of the game. There can only be one winner of The Derby.

Here I am running a trial heat on the day before the Great Race. Joe holds the everpresent stopwatch. When the heat's over, he'll tell me faster tomorrow, faster on the big day. And here's our master, Rhonda again on his shoulder. Doesn't she look splendid in that velvet sheath? And of course Mother, serene as ever, raising her voice only when it's announced that I've set a new track record for a trial heat. And Charley, bowing to the stands to show it's his stepson who set the record.

On the night before The Derby we mill about the stables, stumbled over each other like untrained animals. Here's a group discussing tomorrow's odds, sneaking a look at me, the favorite. But they're nice boys, they all pat me on the back and wish me luck. And here's a bunch of guys playing cards to hide their tension. And, look, here's Tony sitting in a corner with Bill-called-the-Black-Stallion, together enjoying a rare moment of silent contemplation.

AND SUDDENLY it's the day, the big day, the day of The Derby. We prance around anxiously. Each of us eyes the locked door to the entrance ramp often. Starting time nears. We put on our colors and primp before our individual mirrors.

At the last minute The Groom comes in, reverently carrying the ritual brushes which he lays on the stable altar. He leads us in prayer while simultaneously raising the brushes and guiding them in the ceremonial grooming strokes.

Then it is time! We surge through the opened gate to the track.

I can't explain how it feels to walk in the dress parade on Derby Day. We can all say, without egotism, that we are the prime specimens of our race. The masters can take special pride in us, their investments are not wasted.

After the dress parade come the national anthems. First ours. Pride fills our hearts as we watch Old Glory rising to the top of the staff. Then theirs, played on their own native instruments. All in all, a truly beautiful moment.

Now the trainers, in traditional style, leash us and lead us to the starting gate. Many a heart flutters at this symbolical moment. At the gate the leashes are synchronously removed according to the ancient ritual, and the trainers leave their charges on their own. Here's Joe putting an arm around me and telling me he knows in his hearts that I can do it. At the last second before the race's start I pray that I will not shame my family, my trainer, or the masters.

And they're off!

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And that's where you came in.

IN THE FIRST TURN I hold back awaiting my chance, following Joe's instructions. Bill-called-the-Black-Stallion is the pacesetter. Out of the turn and onto the back turf, I slide easily past Fred-called-the-Frisky into third place. But I'm not ready yet to make my play. I keep pace just behind Tony-called-the-Gentle. In this special slow motion shot you can see racers at work, as Bill, Tony, and I begin to break away from the rest of the pack. Zooming in for a closeup, you can see the fruits of Joe's training. See the even pumplike motion of my legs—no movement wasted, everything constributing to the total effort.

Now we come out of the backstretch and into the legendary stretch run. As our philosopher said, legs are really tested in the stretch. Now is the time for me to make my play. Taking the inside, I slip past Tony. Unfortunately my right leg brushes roughly against his left, causing him to break stride, then stumble. I'm sorry, old sport, but that's racing. Here's Tony falling, and the rest of the pack tripping over him and colliding with each other. The race is over for them, poor chaps. A lot of fans got a big laugh out of the basic comedy of this moment, but I can tell you that, in addition to legs and arms, many a heart was broken then.

Now it's just me and Bill-called-the-Black-Stallion. I can see that his legs are tiring, the tendons bulge out like railroad tracks. But one thing about Bill—when they handed out hearts he was first in line and asking for the biggest they got. Here I am, slowly gaining on him. Bill edges closer to the rail and I have to take the outside. Here I am passing Bill, my arm accidentally locking his and unfortunately making him lose rhythm.

As he strikes the ground behind me, I cross the finish line.

My momentum carries me past the line and well into the turn. As I force my weary legs to stop, I hear the incredible noise of the cheering crowd. You can't make out the individual sounds, but the total is that they're telling me you made it, boy, and what's better you made it our way.

I turn and, of course, there's Scaly Joe waiting for me, glee in all his eyes. Ducking my head, I again accept the symbolic leash from Joe. He leads me to the winner's circle. I can't take my eyes off the Golden Shackle now being held up by the track officials. The walk to the winner's circle seems longer than the race.

Here I take a last long look down the track, at all the brave boys who ran the race with me. There they are, being treated by medics, trying hard to hide the hurt in their soul—vowing to accept what destiny offers losers, maybe a stud job, maybe a placement from the masters,

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or—sadly—perhaps the long walk to the candle factory. Whatever, a racer's heart is in anything he does.

And here I am in the winner's circle, being led around by Joe. And here's the proud moment when they fasten the Golden Shackle around my neck. Our master hoists me to his shoulder. There's Rhonda and Mother on his other shoulder. Doesn't Mother glow at this moment? I think I inherited my will to win from her.

And here's Scaly Joe, the uncrowned king of this hour; the trainer of a champion, the constructor of a thoroughbred. Typical of Joe, the model of sportsmanlike modesty, to stand to one side and shine in my reflected glory.

As the tumult reaches its height I take a last look at Mother, who watches me proudly but with tears in her eyes. Unfortunately, this is the last time we will see each other. But, though we are sad, we are also glad because this moment is what we have both worked for, dreamed for, prayed for all these years. So long Mother, good luck in your new pasture.

And now, as the sun sets behind the clubhouse of Bringem Downs, I must reluctantly turn my back on my fleeting moment of glory. But I am not regretful, for I know that I will henceforth stand in the minds of men as a symbol of human progress and the satisfaction of duty. In the competition of sports lies the hope of the race—perhaps our recalcitrant brothers will hearken to my voice and lay down their arms. Now I must face the years to come, when I will always have the memory of the day that sportsfans everywhere cheered Arnold-called-the-Super, Derby champion and a genuine thoroughbred.

—ROBERT THURSTON

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We've heard too little from Pg Wyal in recent years, but this story marks his return to these magazines with a bemused examination of The Perfect State . . .

NICE AND EASY

PG WYAL

Illustrated by JOE STATON

It was 10,000 years before Jimmy Brady knew what hit him.

It was more a matter of skill than chance that blew him away in the first place. He'd been informed that the ground was booby-trapped with gravity-mines, but the demands of nature were impervious to fear, and he disliked the latrine and its gang of pranking privates, each of whom felt secretly that he outranked the others. The soundless implosion of the universe-shattering gravestriction field swallowed him in mid ejaculation—the blink of a cosmic eye.

He materialized in the middle of a broad, leafy mall thronged with people in summer dress or no dress at all. A faint echo receded into the distance—an odd sound, like that of a baloon burst under water.

The sudden transition from moonless night to noon sunshine dazzled and blinded him. He rubbed his eyes and squinted, peering around in paranoid horror until he began to recognize familiar shapes and order in the abruptly transmogrified universe. On either side of the mall were widely spaced rows of pastel one- and two-storey buildings, generally quite conventional looking in the late twentieth-century fashion, except for a dome or tensegrity-tent or two in the glittering distance. The air was free and clean, without haze or soot, and a warm breeze propelled kites and banners loftily into the cloudless heavens.

As the shock subsided and the vibration in his cells seeped away, Jimmy realized that everyone within a radius of thirty feet from him lay prone on the ground. A second later, shaken pedestrians were climbing to their feet, nursing minor injuries and casting Jimmy Brady a variety of dirty looks. He stared back at them and grinned nervously, zipping his fly with one discreet hand.

A plump girl, apparently 20 or so years old, walked up and began

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to talk angrily. "You could have killed us," she said in slightly accented English. "Was that some sort of joke, or are you an anarchist or something?"

"I—uh, I didn't *mean* to—I don't even know what I did. Where am I?" he said, unable to formulate a better question.

"Oh, just about anywhere," said the plump girl, her head tilted and pouting suspiciously. "Where *were* you?"

The boy scratched at the ringworm patch on his scalp. "I dunno, exactly. On a battlefield somewhere in Idaho. But I could just as easily be in Kansas. . .or even Utah. We were dropped."

"A *battlefield?*" shouted the girl. She jumped a little on the balls of her feet. "A real *battlefield?* Oh, wow, a soldier. You're a *soldier!* In a *war!*" Her attitude towards him changed instantly, from an extreme of annoyance to a surfeit of awe. Jimmy felt himself blushing, tugging at the catch of his zipper.

Other people began to cluster in a little circle around Jimmy and the girl. He looked at the audience with increasing embarrassment. "Can anybody here tell me where I am and what's going on? The last thing I recall is being in a war, about five minutes ago. At night. Then everything sort of turned inside out. . .and now I'm here."

The people in the little crowd jostled and looked at each other. After a moment of silence, a thin

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young man in a gray suit stepped forward and said hesitatingly, "You've probably been gravity-bombed."

"Well how come I'm still alive?"

"I can't explain it. . .but I think you've been thrown into the future from wherever you were. I mean, you were in suspended animation, kind of, for a period of time, and now you've popped out, sort of, and I guess something has to be done," the young man finished lamely.

"Yeah," said Jimmy. "What city is this?"

"City?" said the man. His face lost expression for a second, searching for something half recalled. "Oh, I see. Well, you're just in America, kind of. It's all like this."

Jimmy stood scratching his ringworm. If he was to make any sense of the situation, he'd have to take some sort of initiative. His mind whirled, looking for a thought, a unifying principle or explanation. But all he could do was seek to transfer responsibility for this ridiculous accident away from himself to whatever form Providence now took. To Jimmy, that meant authority or government. . .the manifest destiny of power.

"Look," he said, "can anyone direct me to somebody who'll be able to fill me in on what's happened—I mean, people who will know, or have some idea, of what's going on, and if—"

"I see what you mean," said the man in the business-suit. "You want some kind of *authority.*" He sounded pleased with his deduction.

"Yeah!" said Jimmy. "Somebody in charge."

"I'll take you," the man said cheerfully. "Follow me."

THEY ELBOWED through the crowd—still attracting the curious—and walked across the mall and between two buildings. The avenue over was more conventional than the park, apparently paved with two narrow strips of concrete, with a wide island or strip-park between, and evenly spaced streams of identical little electric vehicles floating silently along the concrete lanes at uniform velocity, like corks. Jimmy followed curiously as the young man led him to a side-shunt where several of the little cars sat flatly on the ground in a row. He stuck a plastic card into something that looked like a parking-meter with teeth, and the doors of the machine in front of them slid back. The car was a small rhomboidal-prism in shape, made of pink plastic stuff at the base and a single sloping window all around. Jimmy's escort took the left front seat while the soldier felt the cushions conform to his rump, and the doors slid silently shut.

"This is a gravity-car," the young man explained earnestly.

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"It's controlled by this joy-stick—see?—you push the button on the dash to start, forward on the lever to go forward and accelerate if permitted, pull back to go backwards or brake, and twist to the right or left—" he wiggled the vehicle slightly, jerkily yawing, "to turn. If you need to 'bank' a little at high speed, you push the stick to right or left. It's very simple."

"Yes, it is very simple. Now where are you taking me?" Jimmy had a headache, and spinning mandala patterns were beginning to creep into the corners of his eyes, blotting out vision like glass shards tumbling in a kaleidoscope.

"Uh, to Administration," the man said vaguely, and moved the vehicle out towards the swift-flowing stream of traffic. The car accelerated slowly but with steadily mounting speed down the shunt, until the fellow took his hand off the joystick and sat back. "Administration is the guys who run things. They're pretty smart, and usually nice guys. If you tell them your case, they should be able to help you out."

"Oh," said Jimmy. He decided from their apparent velocity that "60" in red figures on the dash meant Kilometers, and stared rather numbly through the window as the city rolled lazily by. He'd not slept in twenty-five or thirty hours, and his body and uniform were caked with dirt and sweat. The oppressive feeling that he was dreaming wrapped around him like a soft mitten. By now he was in the full throbbing blizzard of a migraine headache, and his vision was nearly blotted out by swirling patterns of nervous discharge. What he was able to discern was neat, pleasant, green and monotonous. Space seemed about evenly divided between clusters of buildings, widely spaced apartments and houses, and frequent patches of park or woods. All of it looked planted and planned. It seemed to roll on without serious variation indefinitely. This was not the neon trash-heap of Greater LA he had known, nor for that matter St. Louie; but it was as stern a rigor of sameness, as lacking of natural fluidity. Neither city nor countryside, but some sort of endless suburban dystopia, universally "nice." There was something engineered-looking to it, as though this were all someone's calculated compromise to a proletarian Master Plan, a computed balance between human park and human zoo. A game-preserve for people. To Jimmy Brady, though, it was merely a myopic vision of paradise; he was on a guided tour of what had to be either heaven or hell. There was no landmark or symbol, though, to give away the secret, *which*. It was merely an abstract vision seen through tinted windows, and as such offered nothing but self-consistent promise. As a promise, it was as fine as any; as reality, it seemed a very subdued joyride where de-

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stination and direction didn't much matter, because everything was going around in a circle anyway.

After a ten minute ride, the car slowed and, judging from its motion, turned into another shunt and stopped. Brady's headache was punctuated, out of the buzzing mist, by the voice of the almost forgotten man in the business suit. "My name's Ralph, incidentally," said the man in the business suit. "We're here. Would you like a cannabin? For your headache. Cannabinol is like aspirin, but milder, more effective and safer. I read about aspirin once." Ralph extended a friendly hand holding a bottle.

Jimmy groped out and took it. He gulped down three slick little pills before Ralph interjected, "Don't take more than one. They're quite effective; more'll get you pretty stoned."

"Thanks," murmured Jimmy, caressing his head. He began to feel simultaneously drowsy and relieved, if a little flushed. The headache evaporated in seconds. He could see now, but things looked exactly the same from this parking-space as from the last. "I feel better, now," Jimmy said, eyes large and heavy-lidded.

"Yes. They work really fast. But you took too many." Ralph seemed distantly scornful, as though Jimmy had done something a bit antisocial.

The car settled down and the doors slid open, and they stood up in the afternoon sunlight. "Over there," said Ralph, pointing to a building that looked like a dentist's office. "They'll be able to help you out." Then, surprisingly, he grinned and bowed, and got back into the little car. It was gone in a few seconds, leaving Jimmy standing alone on the edge of a wide, crewcut lawn with his headache rapidly dissipating and his thoughts beginning to tumble around and over. The marble facade of normal consciousness sloughed off and rolled over, exposing the worms, maggots and horrible beasties that lurk in the mind's plumbing down underneath reality. . .black poisonous jellyfish swimming through green slime. He *had* eaten too many of the cannabinol analgesic pills, he thought with simultaneous panic and euphoria. At least into this world's perfect plan someone had bothered to calculate for a little joy. . . .

HE TURNED AROUND and studied the dentist's-office. It was a brown stucco thing with a flat roof—in Dubuque, where winter blizzards bring meters-deep snow?—and picture windows. Metal letters on the wall spelled out, "ADMINISTRATION, Dubuque Province." He wasn't sure whether this told him less or more than he wanted to know.

He walked across the lawn to where a narrow asphalt path met a glass door, which slid back

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noiselessly to let him through. Inside, a fairly pretty blonde girl sat idly behind a white formica desk. With some hesitation and more than a little embarrassment, he repeated his erstwhile odyssey, omitting the necessary gap.

"Wow," said the girl. "A drop-in." She pursed her lips as if to whistle. "You'd better go see Dr. Fenfield." She tapped a couple of shiny metal dots on the picture-pane in her lap, and a lean, tanned face materialized on the screen. "I think there's a drop-in here to see you," she said, her voice losing none of that tone of surprise, suspense, and professional sweetness. "He just walked in, wearing an *army* uniform!"

Jimmy saw the Doctor's lips move rapidly on the screen.

"No," the girl said. "He's a little stoned—but he seems very honest. I don't think he's crazy or kidding. . . ." The face flashed out.

She looked up at Jimmy and said, "Go on in and see Dr. Fenfield. His name's on the door."

He walked through the door she indicated and down a hallway with several open doors. He had an impression of relaxed people not working very hard—a little bored. One of the doors had Fenfield's name on it, and after a second's hesitation, Jimmy walked in.

A leanly-built man with a dark complexion glanced up at Brady and away from the picture pane on his desk. "Come on in—have a seat," he said. He turned off the screen and Jimmy introduced himself. He found the doctor to be professionally pleasant. Bit by bit, Fenfield coaxed the story out of him and pieced the problem together. The doctor's analysis was brisk—almost a recitation.

"You're a drop-in," Fenfield explained at last. "A refugee from the past. I've checked with the central records terminals, with the screen here, and it seems there's a definite upwards trend to the appearance of you people. I don't think the manner of your appearance leaves any doubt. I hate to have to be the one to explain it, but you are here to stay. You'll never return to your home-time. There's nothing about this phenomenon that's reversible; once caught, there's no going back. I hope you'll make the best of this world, and not mourn unnecessarily for your own."

Jimmy Brady's face fell, but not much; his expression became perhaps a little more dour, but there was no basic change in his mood. He'd had little in his old world, and less to miss. In a perverse, almost petulant way, he felt pleasure at this devastating sequence of events, as though it were in some way revenge against a world that had reduced him to the status of a combat soldier—a lump of dependent cannon-fodder. He missed neither the war, nor the culture it had strived to defend from destruction, nor even the friends and family the

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war had rendered strangers. In a strange way, the war had inculcated a taste for treason and had by the same haphazard means permitted him to indulge that apathy. He felt, for one instant, like a victorious mutineer—a rebel against the meaninglessly self-sufficient cause of war. Yet then the reality of his estrangement pressed in upon him.

"Just *when* am I? And how'd it happen?. . .and what is the connection between what I knew before and this place? It must have taken a long time. . . ."

The Doctor shook his head. "There's been some juggling around of the calendar since then. In terms of years—" he jotted with a pencil, "you were 'outside' for just about 10,000 years. In the reckoning of your own time, that would make this the year. . .uh. . .12,009. Right?"

Jimmy felt a little dizzy; the blood drained from his face. "Right. But so *long?* And everything's the *same.* It ought to be different, somehow. I'm not exactly criticizing it; it's all very 'nice.' But people still speak the same language. . .it all looks like Pasadena."

"Fine town, Pasadena. Lived there myself for forty years. Quiet kind of place," the Doctor said.

Jimmy suppressed the desire to cradle his head in his hands. His dismay was that this world, so far removed from the one he'd left in time, was so similar to it in outlook and orientation. He'd joined the Army to escape boredom and dependency—not from any resolution of values or sense of patriotism—and had found it to be primarily a logistics and support operation, with himself far back in the supply lines and completely removed from the tension and action of combat. The mop and pail boys of war.

Now he just wanted to secure some tiny corner of the truth; so he solemnly asked Fenfield to make a little sense of things.

"Sure. It's really quite simple. You were a victim of your war —something to do with economic systems, wasn't it?—only you just didn't happen to be dispensed with as the enemy, whoever he was, had hoped.

"It happens all the time," Fenfield continued. "From what you've said about 'gravity mines,' I gather you were the victim of a gravitational implosion device—an intense, momentary gravitational field which is supposed to demolish whatever's nearby without doing too much secondary damage, such as destroy valuable terrain or property or start a firestorm. Judging from the records—" he indicated the little TV screen in his lap, "the particular type employed during those last days of warfare produced a field *so* powerful that it created, for the hundred-millionth of a second it took the weapon to detonate, a 'black hole' in the fabric of space and time. Such a gravity field is so intense that, once

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within a certain radius, nothing can escape from the field—not even light, not any field or radiation. Anything inside a black hole is literally outside the physical universe—space *and* time. Totally out of communication with the rest of creation.

"The designers intended for the victim to be torn apart, to the last atom, practically, since the chance *calculated* for a man to be within the 'event horizon' or the black hole's actual diameter was very small. The tidal forces, and the sheer smashing power of the field itself, would crush a man and rip him apart, tearing molecule from molecule and atom from atom. A certain amount of secondary synchotron radiation would also produce a small release of radiant energy for the instant it took the field to squeeze itself out of the universe completely. It's quite possible that your whole garrison, or whatever it was, was sucked or blown into oblivion by the same device that exploded you into the future. But they are most surely dead."

Doctor Fenfield adjusted himself in his chair. "As it turned out, however, whoever designed the weapon miscalculated by a power of ten, and a substantial number—if not quite all—of those caught by gravity bombs were relatively mercifully catapulted into the future. The bomb itself didn't have a decatillionth the mass needed to sustain a natural black hole indefinitely, so the Hole lasted only as long—subjectively—as it took the mechanism to destroy itself. Because of the enormous time-distortion of the field, however, the *objective* time taken for the field to collapse was (and generally is) nine or ten thousand years. The field wasn't felt and had no effect on earth during that time because the field stops *itself* at the event-horizon, warping itself and its own field out of space and time completely. This is a feature peculiar to the almost massless artificial field of a gravity bomb, and is not shared by natural Black Holes, which represent immense concentrations of matter and not a near-instantaneous pocket of synthetic gravity. Of course, this dropping-out of things does violate conservation of mass and energy in the short run, but in the long run things balance out when the small amount of mass and energy contained in the field reappears. Nothing is actually destroyed—just held in trust for a while.

"Several hundred thousand people were gravity-bombed in this manner in that last great war. They tend to pop out—'drop in,' we call it—every now and then. We see them (or parts of them) increasingly often these days. . .we've had to set up a special relocation department to reorient them and get 'em jobs and so forth. It's really all very simple; we're satisfied and they're

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satisfied. Everything is nice and easy." Fenfield showed his teeth in a professional smile, leaning back in his chair satisfied and silent.

"AFTER THE WAR ENDED," said Fenfield after a moment's meditation, "the victors went about establishing the World Federal Republic, of course, and putting things on an even keel, as it were. The world was yanked back from the brink of catastrophe in the nick of time."

"Oh," said Jimmy. "So my side lost. I see."

"Yes, that was the turning point in world history. Since that time, there have been no more wars, no more starvation, no more imperialism, no more ill-distributed wealth and capital, and its attendant evils of power and corruption—petit and absolute. It was, after all, private capital—rather, *corporate* capital—that resulted in the need to make war. Private-capital based economies can only thrive if they expand, and only expand at the expense of some exterior resource, which usually turns out to be another country or continent in the long run. Population *must* expand, to feed the growing economy; consumption *must* increase if the population does not grow, or the economy and its society will stagnate, turn inward, wither. Eventually, they encounter those very laws of Malthusian expansion and collapse, profit and deficit, that only such a system—lacking any natural balance or symmetry unto itself—could postulate. Capitalist systems invariably expand until they implode. . .falling in on their own inevitable vacuum. If a capital, corporate system could continue to expand *forever*, eternally riding the momentum of its own geometric progression, everyone within it might eventually prosper—or at least get enough to eat. But in reality, there's only a very narrow margin in this universe marked out for human life, so some sort of balance must be struck. The problem is defining and maintaining balance."

The soldier was eager to agree. "Yeah—we all realized, in one way or another, that most of our problems resulted from that basic inequality. . .and inequity. As long as certain people had everything—in one sense or another—the rest of us would have nothing. It wasn't my idea to *have* a war, only to escape from my problems by joining one. And in a funny way, it was the war that created the problems in the first place. . .or the things the war served. It just bugs me that I was on the wrong side, and knew it. And didn't do anything about it. . .but I guess if I'd changed my mind, they'd have had me shot—or cut off my welfare and let me starve."

The bureaucrat was going on obliviously. "After the Hegemony was established, and the organiza-

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tion of things decided upon, the Administration set about straightening things out. They put Solar and Fusion power and gravity research on a crash-development priority, fixed up the world weather-patterns—I understand it used to *freeze* in Idaho!—and made sure that the world's still-enormous wealth was properly and evenly distributed. The system of economic, democratic checks and balances that evolved out of the process of world crisis and revolution proved to be so basically viable that it has endured, essentially unchanged, for ten thousand years."

"It all looks like San Diego," mused Jimmy.

"Well. . .we think of it as a proletarian paradise. The Classless Society at last. At least, nobody complains much. We keep things on an even keel. Not too many rough edges. People are happy; everything's nice and easy." The administrator waved his hand. "Earth is *all* like this. The population of twenty billion is evenly distributed across the regions selected for population, agriculture and wilderness lands occupying the rest. And everybody has a job—we'll set you up with a cooperative, or perhaps in Administration, as soon as you've been tested. You'll have plenty of choice, I assure you. You'll be compatible with your work. It's planned that way. It's all planned that way."

Jimmy's eyes blurred for a second in contemplation of these wonders. When they refocused, it was on the only really bright or distracting object in Fenfield's office. On the wall behind Fenfield's desk was a framed print. It was a blue globe on a black background. The globe was a stylized representation of the earth, brilliant alternating spiral bands of blue and white. Spelled out in red letters around the periphery of the globe were the words:

NICE AND EASY

"I don't want to live here," Jimmy said suddenly. "I want to live somewhere else."

"What's wrong with right here," said Dr. Fenfield. "Don't you like it?" He sounded hurt.

"It's very *nice*," Jimmy said with faint exasperation. "But I want to live in a place that's a little more interesting."

"Interesting?" Fenfield said abstractedly, as if trying to remember the meaning of the word. "That's a curse, you know: 'May you live in interesting times.' But, you know, this place is just like any other. 'Be where you are and live where you Be,' and all that."

"Just like any other?" Jimmy said. "How about on Mars?"

"Do you want to live under a dome?"

"Centauri?"

"Just like home," the Doctor smiled.

"Well, what about, say, a globular cluster out of the Galactic plane?" asked Jimmy, as sar-

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castically as his fatigue would allow.

"Home sweet home!" the Doctor said. "We've got it all pretty much under control."

All? thought Jimmy Brady, and decided to keep his mouth shut. It appeared that the only changes had been in the order of magnitude—like those shallow extrapolations certain government institutes used to make, in order to attempt to have some idea of what the future could be *graphed* to contain. (Or was that, too, another syndrome of Malthusian capitalism—capable of thinking only in terms of growth and conquest?) The population must be enormous—a Galaxy smothered by human flesh, or rather laden with a light frosting of it. All working together in complete and tranquil harmony.

The entire universe, upholstered in styrofoam.

Jimmy Brady felt a violent need to change the subject. "What do you do for kicks?"

"Whatever you wish," Fenfield replied evenly. "Anything you like, as you like it—as long as it's peaceful and not counterproductive. We're pretty tolerant—in fact, we teach tolerance in the schools, along with some other things that might surprise you."

"Sex? Drugs?" Jimmy said with sudden interest.

"Of course—those things alleviate boredom, and have a certain moral and philosophical utility as well. The third Hundred Year Plan introduced sexual and drug reforms and education when they realized that society has to somehow accommodate mystics and outcastes, as well as the more predictable and common intellectuals and workers. We've taken *everything* into account—or we wouldn't have lasted this long."

Everything, thought Jimmy, except the occasional need for a little chaos. . .a little unplanned disaster or catastrophe to rattle things up.

But Fenfield anticipated his thoughts. "We even have accidents once in while. See them in the papers." He grinned foolishly and waved his hand loosely. "They always happen somewhere else, though."

"I somehow expected they would."

He wondered—the thought stating itself in just so many words—if all the effort of civilization was just so man could sit down and do nothing while mechanical slaves did all the labor and thinking. Then one could look at the world he'd built, and think, "Here is this world of efficient, reliable machines, and isn't that fine?" And become as lazy and indolent as one were able, indulging every weakness and recessive trait one had, supported like a slug by polite, unobtrusive robots. But then what, when the train gets to Utopia, then what? His mind was too distracted by events to follow the logic through.

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There was a growing reluctance to think—a pressure to *accept* that swelled in his skull and compressed his thoughts until the pressure ejected all others from his mind. Brady felt a non-specific anger that angered him even more by its absense of object. He felt imprisoned in a circumstance he could not define or control or fight. It was not unlike war—except that the fury and tyranny were entirely internal and unvoiced. . .or should one say, *voiceless?* He knew only that he hated—not *who*, not *what*. And the intensity of emotion made him incapable of showing a smile or a tear—he was a mask of a man, bland and baffled, unable to identify his adversary, or even voice his growing fear and helplessness.

For an instant, Jimmy thought he glimpsed in Fenfield's face the old ghost of that feeling—an empathy or vibration. But the older man's face abruptly changed to something dour, smug and powerful, and the fleeting communication ceased. Jimmy's lips trembled slightly; he looked at the desk.

THEY SAT FOR A MOMENT, self-consciously silent and embarrassed, neither able to say just what irritated or angered him about the other, both knowing their reasons for such were indefensible and sensing the conversation had reached some kind of final detente.

"I guess," Jimmy muttered at last, "you might as well do whatever it is you're supposed to do."

Fenfield immediately brightened. "Of course. We'll have you in at your convenience in a day or two for testing and placement. I'll assign you a room right nearby—you're sure you want to live in Dubuque Province, aren't you. . .?"

"Why not."

"Fine—fine! Now, the tests are quite painless. And you'll like your new job, I'm sure. If training is necessary, you like that, too. Whatever happens, you'll find it nice, and easy. Here—" the Doctor wrote on a piece of paper and handed it to Jimmy. "The date and time for the test, and your temporary address. Okay?" Fenfield smiled. "Here's a universal credit-card." Jimmy's fingers took a square of blank red plastic.

"Fine," said Jimmy Brady. "Whatever you say."

They stood up and shook hands. Jim turned and walked through the door, down the hallway. . .he noticed, the gears of his mind turning over from their own exhausted momentum, a few of the minute details that added up to the office: That the floor was covered with blandly pastel carpet; the ceiling emitted soft yellow light at a soothing level of brightness; the walls were hung with what looked like typical office-abstract paintings, calculated for innocuity. The general impression left no impression at

(cont. on page 34)

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THE DREAMING DERVISH

This story marks Spider Robinson's first appearance here–and with a story the impact of which you'll not soon forget . . .

SPIDER ROBINSON

Illustrated by JEFF JONES

COME:

There is a place, somewhere between the interstices of what an inhabitant of the smallest sub-atomic particle posited by Man would think of as the smallest basic elements of matter. To this place, of which we can speak only by analogy, we must go in order to witness an extremely tiny bit of co(s)mic tragedy.

An analogy, then. Consider:

YELLOW.

Everywhere yellow, planes and rods of plunging yellow, flares and beams and swirls of pulsing lemon yellow against a day-glo yellow backdrop.

The backdrop is, to all intents and purposes, infinite.

Before you, focus of your vision, is a large.

Deeply, richly violet.

Velvet.

Snowflake.

It shimmers deep purple and radiates warmth. Warming the yellow.

It is a sub-sub-sub-submicroscopic Tool For Good.

ELSEWHERE:

Something dormant stirs. Sluggish activity returns to long-unused cortical matter; feeble awareness flickers.

Massive beyond belief, this dreaming giant, but see him as he sees himself! Thus:

A gaily festooned dancer, his rich blue and green finery ample evidence of wealth and power. A handsome young lord of his race. Deranged now, with the sweet madness of lust and ritual. Deployed, with several rival suitors, in the Dance of Competitive Courtship, circling ever round the bewitching, maddening essence of Woman, wooing her with the polish and precision of his intricate swirls in endless permutations of choreographic brilliance. Steeped in madness, possessed, intoxicated, lost in a kind of adrenalin stupor.

A Dreaming Dervish.

. . . As he sees himself. Now, in a flaring brief gestalt in the first

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struggling flicker of consciousness, an assertion of his existence and his identity. Through his mind's eye blast your reason with the sight of his Goddess, her coruscating, searing yellow strangely akin to that in the Land of the Purple Snowflake.

As we see him:

Impossibly enormous, immeasurably strong, but in the grip of a sort of inertia of rest. Utilizing perhaps a billionth part of his intellect, and that drugged and torpid. And yet, beneath the paralyzed stupor of utter contentment, possessed of ample power to split a continent as a housewife splits an egg. Fafnir asleep in the caves, "den letzten Riesen" guarding the Nibelung Hoard.

Hercules in Chains.

But dreaming.

Dreaming.

Awareness coalesces, pulses dimly somewhere within the mass.

Annoyance.

Irritation.

The Dancer has contracted fleas.

HE PICKED HIS WAY among the trees, his knapsack stuffed with wine and cheese, and as darkness fell he wrote a song in his mind. It was a lighthearted North Country song, taking its melody and some of its chuckling harmony from the nearby Saranac River which rushed down like a young

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tidal wave from the mountains to the north. An old Gibson J-45 in a cloth case was slung over his shoulder, the leading edge of the sounding box cupped protectively in his left hand, but he made no attempt to unsling it and pick out the chords his mind envisioned. He had learned long ago not to interrupt when a river took a solo, and concentrated on discovering the words that lay behind the turns of melody (with another, much lonelier part of his mind he wondered who he was writing the song *to*). After a time he began to sing parts that rhymed.

He was a very short man, and more than a few of his friends had yielded to the temptation to describe him—and think of him—as a hobbit. His hair was curly and plentiful and brown, as was his mustache, as were his beard and eyebrows. A long, curved pipe of Borghum Riff climbed in one corner of his mouth and fragrant trails of tobacco-smoke squirted out the other, making his mustache wag back and forth rhythmically, laugh-tracks appearing and disappearing as he shifted gears.

Fifty yards to his left, the Saranac changed key suddenly, rose to a roar. He did not need to peer through the pines to know where he was; he knew this river as lover's hand knows lover's thigh. He was come to the Old Dam, dynamited years ago when the new one was built, further upstream. Massive concrete walls still ran out fifty-odd feet from either side of the river, separated by a hundred yards of smashed ruin. Through this gap boiled hundreds of tons of water, rushing over the immense jagged stone teeth that gleamed green beneath the surface, as though to wash them clean of decay.

He smiled at the simile, knowing that in twenty more years the river would finish what man and gelignite had started, grinding the multi-ton bicuspids to powdery sand. He had spent many happy hours sitting at the abrupt end of the nearside wall, dangling weary feet in the torrent that pelted by, feeling frenzied river-fingers restore the circulation.

He decided to sit there now and make a supper of the wine and red cheese in his pack. In an hour it would be too cool to sit still comfortably (the other, more plaintive part of his mind wondered if there would ever be someone warm here with him). He hitched the guitar strap higher on his sturdy shoulder and set course for the Dam, and as he emerged from the trees a few yards from the breakwater she was simply there, feet raising bow waves in the rushing water.

They saw each other simultaneously, and a kind of mutual recognition was exchanged. She moved sideways to make room, and he walked out onto the concrete strip to join her. She was no taller than he, and long flowing brown hair swept her shoulders as

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she turned her head toward him. She was fair of face and fair of form, and she had the eyes of a poet, which she was.

In those eyes he saw a mirror-reflection of the question in his own, and the other, more wistful part of his mind was still, hoping.

IRRITATION turns to anger, but oh! slowly. . . .

It has been long and long since the Dancer last employed this mode of consciousness, monitored this level of reality. Or, for that matter, any other.

The Dream fades reluctantly, and decades pass as annoyance gives slow birth to volition. At no time does the slumbering behemoth truly awaken, nor detach any significant fraction of his real attention from the all consuming intricacies of The Dance–yet somehow there is formed a (Dancer), which slips sideways through forgotten planes and discarded viewpoints until it confronts and considers the sheaf of probabilities in which are to be found The Fleas.

Comprehension and action are simultaneous; the (Dancer) instantly exerts its full authority, invokes emergency powers, locks into the countless throbbing nodes of thought which are the core ego of the madly whirling, sublimely unconscious Dancer. These pulsing guidance centers are. . .

Not disturbed.

Tapped.

A fine, omnidirectional rain of will saturates the (Dancer) from all sides, and like a sponge it absorbs thirstily, and unlike a sponge it grows smaller as it drinks. And harder. Substance from all phases of the vast ego spirals downward and inward, imploding and shrinking to a sharp, poignant needlepoint.

Of white-hot rage.

The (Dancer) is Taking Steps.

TOWARD FOUR in the morning he rose from the mattress and padded away through the dark. She sat up, reaching over the now-uncased guitar to bring rest to a tone-arm that had been whispering unheard against the last hiccupping groove of the *Carmina Burana* for nearly an hour; and she smiled a smile just a bit softer than her face was used to. Three feet away in any direction was impenetrable black. It emitted treble sounds, and eventually he returned, with two glasses of smoky fluid, his chest still glistening with sweat.

"I (ahem) don't believe we've been properly introduced," he began with exquisite formality, but she giggled and placed a hand over his lips, taking the proffered drink with the other.

"Not now," she said happily but firmly. "Later. Later I'll tell you my name and my hometown and what I do for a living and what my favorite songs are and what I think of Borges and about the

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time I was in the hospital and what my last lover was like but not now. Let's take tonight for itself, because I've got a funny feeling that we're going to be busy enough the next few years getting to know one another."

"Machka, you speak truth," he said gravely. "Here's to us."

They drank together. She began to cough uncontrollably, liquor splashing over the sides of her glass.

"I oafed out," he cried, rescuing the glass with haste and a certain reverence and patting her efficiently on the back. "You're not used to Bushmill's!"

"You what?" she choked, eyes streaming.

"Oafed out," he repeated, as her spasms subsided. "It's sort of like a freak-out, but without the prestige. Like, it's Senior Prom night and you slam the taxicab door in front of the Rainbow Room and catch the sleeve of your tux in the doorhandle and it rips to the armpit. Or you're having tea with the relatives and you spill whipped cream on your lap and to distract attention you yell, 'Look out the window,' and they all look out to see two dogs locked in congress on the front lawn. Or you try to ski through a revolving door. You know, an oaf-out."

She was giggling by the time he was done, and he struck up an improvised locomotive, in which she joined without missing a beat.

"Gimme an O!"

"Oh!"

"Gimme an A!"

"A!"

"Gimme an F!"

"F!"

"Gimme a hyphen!"

"-!"

"Gimme another O!"

"'Nother O!"

"Gimme a U!"

"You!"

"Gimme a T!"

"Sure, want a toke?"

"Whaddya got?"

They chorused.

"OAF-OUT!!!"

In perfect harmony.

"Also," he said seriously when their laughter had subsided, "an oaf-out is when you slip Irish whiskey to, someone who may never have tried it before, without warning them. Gee, but ain't it smooth, though?" He did a thing with his mouth that made his mustache ripple.

"How much do they get for this stuff?" she asked.

"Oh, seven, eight bucks a bottle."

"Smooth," she said. "Oh yeah, smooth."

"You'll do," he said judiciously. "Seriously though, would you like some water with that?"

"Could I have just a little?"

"Sure thing. Happen to have some pure water—cold, too." He put both their glasses on the floor and got up, genitals swaying, to wander off into the dark again. She watched his graceful angularity melt away in the gloom, admiring the muscles of his legs.

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Light burst from an opened refrigerator, defining the interior of the cabin, placing new limits on the universe which the past five hours had created, but she did not look away. He removed a corked flask of water from the refrigerator, and the limits were gone again. Shortly he reappeared out of the gloom, poured measured amounts of water into both glasses, recorked the flask and sat down, returning her drink to her.

"River water?" she asked, sipping appreciatively.

"Right from the Saranac," he agreed, making his glass empty. "I filled up the flask this morning, about ten minutes before I met you." His smiled widened, threatening to outgrow the frame of his beard and mustache. "A good thing, too—or I never would have remembered, and we'd be drinking these straight."

"Here's to foresight," she grinned, accepting the compliment.

"And to five-sight in the bargain," he seconded. She winced noticeably. "The success of a pun," he misquoted thoughtfully, "is in the *oy* of the beholder."

She gulped the rest of her drink, underplaying beautifully, and his heart leapt within him and he pulled the cord that turned on the ceiling light so that he might see her better, and then he wished he had not, for there was on the floor that which had better gone unseen.

Originally it had been intended for their dinner. Then somehow quickly it had become something in the way, something to be dropped on the floor in the headlong tumble toward the bed, and then it had been simply a collection of chopped meat and chili beans and spices on the floor. And now it was. . .

A hundred thousand large black ants, the vanguard of a long, wide column which stretched across the floor from under the sink. A coiling carpet of marching ants, a phalanx of squirming black.

The two made remarkably similar noises, roughly simultaneously. And then he struck, and with hastily rolled-up newspaper and then with a broom and finally with large bowls of water he slew his millions. As she, efficiently brushing her hair back with one hand, kept full bowls coming.

When the carnage was done. . . .

AFTER A TIME for which there is no measuring the needlepoint (Dancer) reaches its needful dimensions, ceases to shrink inward. It is well beyond any human ken, navigating within the heart of a nucleus as somfortably as might a flea in deep space. It has a vicious urgency, this (Dancer), and a hunger for revenge that passes understanding. Beside it, a diamond is more brittle than dried clay, and there are not sufficient decimal places to write the comparative power of, say, a cobalt bomb.

It orients itself. A strange place,

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this. Everywhere yellowness. Wave after wave of gentle yellow.

The (Dancer)'s resolve falters for a microsecond. For yellowness is the essence of the Woman, and to contemplate violence and hatred in this place is primevally disturbing to the (behemoth) (mote). Only the realization that this gentle yellowness had been perverted fires rage again; but now the die is irretrievably cast.

Sensor-functions register.

A shift of viewpoint brings the target into focus, a lambent splash across the yellow, and the spirit of the (Dancer) shrieks within it at the beauty it must destroy, the exquisite intricate symmetry of the notion which must be obliterated. It hangs there innocently, pulsing.

A warm, violet, velvet snowflake.

"S' FUNNY," he said, rummaging in a kitchen drawer. "This thing has got to be one of the all-time kitchen indispensables, and nobody ever talks about it. Unsung, ignored, it sits in lonely grandeur in every home across the country, and it hasn't even got a fancy name."

"What's that?" she exclaimed.

"Why the Tool Drawer, of course. Why, they. . ."

"No, turkey, what's that in your *hand*?"

He glanced down in mock surprise at the small object he had just removed from the boundless clutter of the Tool Drawer. It was a disc-shaped object, of the approximate size and dimensions of a hockey puck, spotted with the acne of advertising small print. "Oh this? It's called an ant-trap. Also a kitchen indispensable.. See, there's a very sweet stuff inside, which is a thoroughly energetic poison. Along comes an advance scout for the ants, and he figures it's raining soup and brings a huge chunk home to share with the boys. In a couple of days, your kitchen is your own, and you don't even have to sweep 'em up. They're all at home, sitting 'round the dinner table, wiped out by wdhat you might call their just dessert." He grinned.

THERE *is no way to describe the sorrow of the (Dancer); hundreds of decades would have to pass before human intellect could hope to comprehend the nature of that thing we have chosen to call a violet snowflake, understand the place of that tenuous analogy in the grand puzzle of physics. But it too has been subverted, all its loveliness shot through with cancer and made ugly in the end. And so with redoubled fury the (Dancer) hardens itself within as well as without, and reaches beyond itself, and. . .wills.*

The warm violet snowflake, sole warmth of the yellow here, shimmers.

The shimmer becomes a shiver.

The shiver increases.

Builds.

Swells.

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Rises to a screaming crescendo of dysharmonic, uncomprehending agony.

The violet snowflake disintegrates into a million shards which evaporate instantly. There is no sound. There is no flash. There is nothing. Nothing at all.

Except yellow.

(THE PASSING of the "violet snowflake" kicks off several interesting subatomic reactions, whose effects on a molecular level are decidedly unusual. Think of Yellowness Unchained.)

"WHAT'S so gross about it? It's just an efficient way to knock off ants, is all. Surely you don't object to killing ants? So why not do a proper job?" He sipped his drink and lay back on the bed, swaying to Mose Allison on the stereo.

"I suppose," she said, biting her lip. She hugged herself tightly and shivered, though she could not know it, just like a violet snowflake. "But it seems so cold-blooded. "I. . .how would you like it if, say, somebody poisoned the river?"

"Been done," he said sardonically, still moving to Mose's walking bass line. "You can't drink water from downriver past the college and live. But see, that's your whole mistake. You're identifying with the little bastards. You've let yourself get wrapped up in the very anthropomorphic idea of inevitable, inescapable Doom, but you've lost sight of the Doomee."

She did not laugh.

"After all," he was going to say, "they're only ants," but he did not say that because as he formed the words in his throat they seemed to catch fire and grow spikes, convulsing his body with a searing black pain that spread outward from his esophagus until the room ran red before him. The last thing he heard was Mose Allison (". . .the Foolkiller's comin', gettin' closer every day. . ."), and the last thing he saw was the way in which her expression changed from terrified incomprehension to gasping agony. Then he was dead on his feet, toppling like a felled oak.

Her eyes fell with sick horror to the two empty whiskey glasses on the floor by the bedside, and widened. Somehow, impossibly, she made the last correct guess of her life, entirely intuitively. Then something behind her pupils shattered, and her dying thought (*"The water!"*) spun sideways and dissipated.

So did *all* human thought over the next few days.

THE Dancer sighs almost audibly (a mountain range crumbles) *and shivers slightly in ecstasy* (a tsunami cleanses the barren lands), *without losing step in his Dance Of Love. Happily, he returns his full attention to the incandescently yellow Woman and sinks back into deep trance. The*

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infection has been wiped out. Order is restored. The Fleas are no more.

The Dance goes on.

LISTEN. LISTEN HARD. Do you hear the echo of a warm violet snowflake?

—SPIDER ROBINSON

Nice and Easy (cont. from page 25)

all. The office could have been interchanged with any from 1920 onward, except for superficial technological advances and differences in decor, hardly noticeable unless pointed out. It was like this everywhere. . .and everywhen, from six or seven thousand years in the past until god-knew-when in the future.

The glass door slid back, and Jimmy walked into late afternoon sunlight. The grass was green and manicured, the wide avenue ahead plush with foliant. Little electric cars slithered silently by, like corpuscles in an infinite network of capillaries, veins, arteries, and somewhere, one had to be sure, the great and throbbing heart of the cosmos. Or was this world a bland, bloodless worm, with work and energy distributed evenly throughout the gray, undifferentiated flesh? He would explore and find out. . .in a while.

JIMMY BRADY stood outside the office, watching the flow of life in this tranquil new world, 10,000 years after his birth. A gradual feeling of peace and contentment ebbed over him, as though something in his mind that had been clenched tight and angry were slowly letting go. As though a straightening raiment his mind had been conscribed by were shed, and he could run in glorious nudity.

Whether he was a prisoner of circumstance or an equal comrade in the struggle for existance, he did not know nor wonder. He strode down the path in the bright sun-light towards the waiting row of clean little cars, knowing that, at least, he would be provided for. . .that he would be given something to do. There was a little security in this abundant and peaceful world, and a place for every soul to rest, if one were willing to make a few compromises. Jimmy Brady had, if nothing else, a feeling of a little peace.

He didn't even hear the sound of the lock clicking as the doors closed softly and efficiently behind him.

—PG WYAL

ON SALE IN JULY FANTASTIC—MAY 21st

L. SPRAGUE DE CAMP and *LIN. CARTER'S* greatest *NEW CONAN* novelet-*RED MOON OF ZEMBABWEI. A must for all CONAN readers.*

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Unlike his last appearance here ("War of the Magicians," Nov., 1973), this story by William Rotsler is a science-fantasy, a sharp vignette of tomorrow . . .

A NEW LIFE

WILLIAM ROTSLER

CIRELLA STIRRED in his sleep, giving a low moan and twisting his head on the blanket.

—light—wind that was not-wind—an urging—the feeling that there was a voice calling that he could not quite hear—calling his name—not his name, but his name—

The dark-haired man groaned loudly and twisted again, his arm hitting the woman. She opened her eyes, saw his figure outlined darkly against the dimness of the wall, lit by the unheard but brightly alive Pleasure Park across the bowl.

"What's the matter, honey?" she said groggily. Juno Darr hated to wake up, get up or go to bed. He twisted his torso again and his leg kicked against her. "Those nightmares again?" She stroked his arm and slid her hand up to caress his face, feeling the morning stubble on his dark jaws.

He quieted, and seemed to lapse into peaceful slumber. Juno lay awake for a moment, imagining she heard the laughter and music from the Park a mile or so across the big bowl of apartments on the other rim. Then she, too, slipped back into sleep.

— calling — darkness — light — more light — closing — a wanting — someone — something — wants Cirella — no — not Cirella — someone — the one known as Cirella — him — wanting — light — dawn — no — light — bright — fear — calm fear — no fear — wanting — want — come —

Cirella's eyes popped open in the dark and he looked around the room, his body rigid, ready for flight.

Who wanted him? What was after him? What to do?

The room was normal. She hadn't left the wall panel on, not even a soothing abstraction channel. Cirella looked at her, sleeping peacefully, her mouth slightly open. The thermosheet was down a little from her bosom and her full breasts were bared. One, slightly flattened, stuck straight up, but the lower one swung a little to one side. She smelled of *Martian Night Storm* and a little of sweat.

Is that the dawn, or the Park?

Cirella sat up on his elbows, glancing at Juno to see if she was

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disturbed, but she slept peacefully on. *Nothing wakes her up,* he thought.

The hairy dark man slid out of bed and walked naked to the window. Neither of them had remembered to dial it opaque the night before; Cirella could immediately see out over the dark bowl of structures towards the ever-lit Pleasure Park.

Here and there were lights, squares and triangles and rectangles and circles of light, some colored, some not. *Early risers or late parties,* Cirella thought. He looked down at the tiny patch of the traffic artery he could see just past a corner of the Judson Air Music Conservatory. It was very empty, even at this hour, as the big silent vans brought in food shipments from Agricorps and Delta City.

Was I having a nightmare?

Opposite, the gaudy levels of the Park were lighting the whole side with a faint, pulsating glow. He counted down two levels from the Crown Room and over five blocks to The Erosphere. *She works there,* he thought, the image of the voluptuous golden body writhing through his mind in a sort of subliminal flash-frame.

Was she in the nightmare? Was it she who. . .called?

The woman disturbed him just being with her. Not like Juno, and not just the raw sexuality of her, but. . .in other ways, ways he found difficult to explain, even to himself, or understand.

Why did she continue to work there? He would support her, she knew that. Was it her independence? Was it dislike of him? Was it Juno? *I told her I'd cancel Juno's contract and have her out in two days.*

Was there some other reason?

Did she stay there because she got so much attention? All those men and their lust dreams about her fantastic flesh—was that what she wanted? Was it just ego?

Quietly, Cirella went into the bathroom and depilitated and defecated, then dressed. He put on the black triskin suit and the fam boots, then quietly let himself out.

I'll call her later and tell her where I am. Or where I'll be.

He took the fastdrop to the direct-west level and a high speed walkway to the other side of the bowl. He thought idly of taking a fast-up to the top and watching the dawn come up over the serrated edge of California, shining on the miles of citytops, but he changed his mind. Seeing a megacity at dawn depressed him as often as it delighted him.

Instead he took a Pleasure Park fast-up and then walked himself along the gaudy curve towards The Erosphere. Fulltime fêtes beckoned with everything at their disposal, from Alpha wave projectors to signs to hawkers, both male and female, both live and robotic.

Starharem offered visions of pleasure never seen on Earth. A

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psychbooth promised blissful non-tension. Drug-O-Rama displayed itself in all its many manifestations. A twenty-foot robotic beauty passed eager spenders between her legs into Eroticon, where one might find the fulfillment of a lifetime's search. A tunesmith in ragged triskins offered to write him a song.

"You, you there!" A bare-breasted Amazon in a shimmering *crillon* waved at Cirella and shouted, "You, in black! Tried the Pagan Palace?" Cirella shook his head and moved on through the sparse crowd. "Next time, huh?" she shouted after him. "Ask for the Turk!"

The big dome of The Erosphere loomed up before him and Cirella pulled out his Unicredit and was passed through. The inside of the huge dome was smooth and white, making a gigantic screen for a fantastic display of light, color, movement, abstractions, direct sexual imagery and a background for the dancers on the round center podium. The orchestras were hidden, but nothing of the girls were.

—come—

Cirella stopped in midstride, his eyes bulging. *It had been so clear! It wasn't a nightmare!*

He looked around and saw no one looking at him. There were only the people at the tables looking at the quartet of voluptuous blondes going through their number. He started walking uncertainly towards the podium.

—come—

He turned, not even surprised now. *It came from that direction.* As he went along the back of the concentric rings of tables he saw ahead the discreet sign *Talent.* As he grew closer he saw the door was label for authorized personnel only. There was a guard.

"I'm. . .wanted," he said. The guard looked him over and without a change of expression motioned him through.

The door opened on a curved passage.

—come—

He turned right and stopped before a blank door. He opened it and went in.

"Hello," said Loree.

"Hello," Cirella said. He sat down and looked at her as she put on the final touches. *God, she is so beautiful.*

— thank you — warmth — light — bright —

You're the one.

— yes — question — up — bright — didn't you know?

No. How could I.?

— your — burst/burst/bright — is so hard — shiny hard — brick of steel — dark —

"I'm not like you," Cirella said aloud. She smiled and touched the corner of her mouth for the last time and stood straight, turning toward him, golden and lush, her scanty crillon floating with the movement, the tiny golden coins around her neck tinkling.

— wait — stop — wait —

"Yes," Cirella said.

(cont. on page 108)

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FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND

BRIAN ALDISS

Illustrated by MIKE KALUTA

Time was slipping disasterously! Bodenland found himself timeslipped from the year 2020 to the year 1816, but even there slippages were occurring from season to season while Bodenland pursued a man named Victor Frankenstein and his creature stalked the Frigid Lands of another time and place!

(Second of Two Parts)

SYNOPSIS

A DISASTEROUS Last War has ruptured time and space and Joseph Bodenland finds his Texas ranch of 2020 timeslipped into another era. It is not the first such slippage, but this time while he is out in his Felder (and atomically-fueled automobile) the slippage ceases and he finds himself trapped in the time and land to which the ranch was briefly transported.

It is Switzerland in the year 1816, near the (much smaller) city of Geneva. Aware that he is unlikely to ever see his home time or family again, but compulsively recording his adventures on tape whenever a free moment allows him, Bodenland plunges into an adventure the scale of which stretches his own imagination.

For he meets Victor Frankenstein, the son of a powerful syndic of Geneva, whose youngest brother William has been murdered, and whose nurse, Justine Moritz, is on trial for that murder. Although Bodenland finds it at first difficult to accept, he does accept the fact (unknown to the public) that this Victor Frankenstein is the living model for the protagonist in May Shelley's novel, *Frankenstein or The New Prometheus*, and that he has indeed created a monster—his creature having committed the murder for which Justine Moritz has been charged.

Going to the courtroom to observe the proceedings, Bodenland watches the Frankenstein family closely. At the head of the family is old Alphonse, the syndic. He has held many important posts in Geneva and is a counsellor, as had been his father and grandfather before him. Alphonse is consoled by Elizabeth Lavenza, a startingly beautiful woman who was adopted as a small child by the counsellor's wife (who is now dead) and who is expected to marry Victor. She is known to have instigated a series of protracted lawsuits in her own right with authorities in Milan, Vienna and a German city, in an effort to reclaim a fortune supposedly left her by a defecting father. Victor is seated beside her, obviously troubled, less obviously feeling guilt for the true cause of his youngest

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brother's death and the unjust accusation of the boy's nurse. Next to Victor is his brother Ernest, slender and rather dandyish of dress, despite being, like the others, in deep mourning. Also in the courtroom are the Clervals, of whom Henry Clerval is a close friend of Victor's.

Justine is found guilty, and Bodenland finds Victor after the trial and confronts the man. But Victor is both vain and impatient with Bodenland, finally charging him only to deliver a note to Elizabeth explaining to her his desire to remain in isolation in the wilderness for the time being.

Delivering the note, Bodenland decides next to seek out the nearby abode Lord Byron, the great English poet, who is summering upon Lake Geneva. On the way, however, he discovers with great amazement that the seasons have advanced by three months—and it is now August, when the day before it had been May!

It is an unusually rainy August, he finds, and much complained about. But he finds Lord Byron, and in his party his poet-companion, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Shelley's mistress (eventually to become his wife), Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin. The latter intrigues him very much, both because, at eighteen, she is beautiful and unconventional, and because she is to author the novel about Frankenstein.

While the others are away for the day, Bodenland reveals himself to Mary as a timetraveller, and tells her that her novel—as yet unfinished—will become a great classic in the years to come. Bodenland finds himself entranced by Mary. They swim together in the lake and then make love. Their day is a moment out of time. She follows him back to his car and marvels at its luxuries. She strokes the back of the driving seat:

"This is beautiful material. Is it from some hitherto undiscovered animal, surviving perhaps in the Southern Continent?"

"No, it is plastic, manmade—one of the many tempting gifts of Frankenstein's heirs!"

She laughed. "You know, Joe, you are my first reader! A pity you don't remember my book a little better! A pity I do not have a copy bound to present you with! How grandly I would inscribe it. . . Are you going now?"

I nodded, suddenly almost too full of emotion to speak.

"Mary, come with me! You are a displaced person, I swear! —Come and be a displaced person with me!"

She held my hand. "You know I can't leave dear Shelley. He means to mend the world, but he needs me to mend his clothes. . .Do you like me, Joe?"

"You know it goes beyond that! I worship and respect your character. And your body. And your works. Everything that is Mary Shelley. You are woman and legend—all things!"

"Except the fictitious character by which I am best known!"

"It stands greatly to your credit that you warned the world about him."

We kissed and she climbed out on to the track, clutching Willmouse to her neat breast. She was smiling, although there were tears in her grey eyes.

"You must say my farewells to Lord Byron and Shelley. I am ashamed that I have abused their hospitality."

"Don't spoil things by being conventional, Joe! We have been phantoms out of Time."

"Oh, dearest Mary. . ."

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We smiled mutely and hopelessly at each other, and I started the auto rolling, back in the direction of Geneva.

For a long while, I could see her in the rear-view mirror, standing in the dusty road in her long white dress, holding her child and looking after the Felder. Only when she was out of sight and I had turned a corner did I remember that I had left the little willow leaf from her body lying upstairs on her Sophocles.

She would see it when she climbed up to bed that night.

XI.

GENEVA BEGAN TO SEEM almost a familiar place to me, with its thriving water front, grand avenues, narrow streets, and busy horse traffic.

I had left my automobile behind a farmer's barn beyond the city walls, and was making my way to Frankenstein's house. I had resolved that I would make an alliance with him, persuading him not to create a female creature and helping him to hunt down and exterminate the creature already at large in the world.

As if that quest were not macabre enough in itself, I went as if under some sort of malediction. For the date was now early in July. So I had ascertained from newspapers. The harvest I had seen gathered a few kilometres away was back on the stalk.

Even allowing for the probability that Time was no non-stop streamliner, faring ever forward at the same speed every day of creation, some fresh interruption of Nature must have occurred to explain its present serpentine course. Two possibilities came to mind. The first was, that the timeshock I had suffered was inducing some highly life-like illusions. The second was, that the grave time-ruptures of my own age, produced by the damage done to space-time, were sending their ripples backwards.

This second possibility was the one I preferred, especially since I saw on reflection that such ripples might produce some of the effects of the first possibility. The time-distortions might cause mental illusions in their own right.

One of these illusions was my persistent sensation that my personality was dissolving. Every act I took which would have been impossible in my own age served to disperse the sheet-anchors that held my personality. Embracing Mary Shelley, enjoying her love and her perfumes, had produced the greatest solvent effect so far. It was a strangely anomic creature who strode up to the door of the house of the Frankensteins and rapped for admittance.

Once more, the manservant was there to show me into the drawing room. Once more, that room was empty. But only for a moment.

Pale Elizabeth came in, imperious and dressed in a satin dress, high-waisted and very decolleté, with Henry Clerval at her side.

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He was as ruddy as she was pale, his manner as indolent as hers was severe and to-the-point.

Clerval was a round-faced man, pleasant of feature, I thought, but his expression was far from friendly. He made no attempt at any civility, and left Elizabeth to do the talking.

She said, "I cannot imagine why you have returned here, Mr. Bodenland. Do you have any more messages to bring me from Victor Frankenstein?"

"Am I so unwelcome, ma'am? I did you a small service once by delivering a letter. Perhaps it is fortunate for my own sake that I have no further letter now."

"It is unfortunate for you that you brazenly appear at all."

"Why should you say that? I had not intended to trouble you on this occasion. Indeed, I may say it was not my wish to see you at all. I hoped to speak to Victor, or at least have a word with his father."

"The Syndic is indisposed. As for Victor—you probably know his whereabouts better than we do!"

"I have no idea where he is. Isn't he here?"

Clerval now decided it was his turn to be unpleasant. Coming forward accusingly, he said, "Where is Victor, Bodenland? Nobody's seen him since you delivered that last message. What passed between you on that occasion?"

"I'm answering no questions until you answer a few. Why should you be hostile to me? I've done nothing to offend you. I spoke to Victor twice only and had no quarrel with him. You have more reason to wish him harm than I have, isn't that so?"

At that, Clerval came forward angrily and seized my wrist. I struck his arm down and stood ready to hit him again, harder. We glared at each other.

"We've good reason to have our suspicions of you, Bodenland. You are a foreigner with no settled establishment, you did not pay your hotel bill at Sécheron, and you have a horseless cabriolet that smacks of strange powers!"

"None of that is your business, Clerval!"

Elizabeth said, urgently, "Here they come now, Henry!"

And I had already heard footsteps in the hall.

The door was flung open and two burly men in boots, sturdy breeches, coarse shirts, and bicorne hats marched in. One had a pistol in his belt. I doubted not that they were law officers, but did not linger for a second look, being already at the casement windows into the side garden. Clerval I had pushed aside.

As I dashed out, Ernest Frankenstein loomed up. They had had the forethought to post him in the garden. He was a slip of a lad. I struck him in the chest and sent him reeling. The delay was enough for Clerval to catch me and seize me from behind. I turned round and caught him a

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blow in the ribs. He grunted and got an arm round my neck. I brought my heel down on his instep, and then caught his forehead with my knee as he instinctively doubled with pain.

That last was a luxury I should not have allowed myself, for the toughs were on me. They got in each other's way at the window. Ducking under their grasp, I fell into the garden, staggered up, running already, dodging a flying kick from Ernest, and was away down the path.

They had a long, long garden, with a high wall at the end. There was a trellis against it, which I could climb—but quickly enough?!

As I flung myself at it, pounding footsteps were behind me. I hauled myself to the top of the wall, looking back as I prepared to jump.

Ernest was almost at my legs, then one tough, then the second, halting on the path, then Clerval and Elizabeth back by the house. The second tough was aiming his little pistol at me, using both hands to steady his aim—he had had sense enough not to fire when running and waste his one shot. He fired even as I jumped.

I fell into a lane. It was not a very high jump. The ball had hit me in the leg. It was not a bad wound, but entirely enough to make me land badly and wrench my ankle.

Staggering up, I leaned against the wall, panting and gasping, wondering how severely I was hit. With one leg bleeding and one crippled, I had no chance. My pursuers swarmed over into the lane and seized me.

In a short while, limping and protesting, I found myself at the local prison, pushed into a filthy stinking room with some two dozen other malefactors.

How bitterly I thought that night of the happiness I had left that morning! How longingly I recalled of that other bed, with Sophocles beside it and Mary in it, as I camped out on unsavoury sacks among the dregs of humanity who were my new companions!

BY MORNING, I was covered in bites from a number of loathesome insects who fed better than I did.

However, I was far from despair. After all, I could not be punished for the death of Victor Frankenstein if he was not dead. Nor was I as isolated as might at first appear. For I knew there were English-speaking visitors in Geneva if I could only establish communications with them; they might be induced to take up my cause. And the Shelley-party were near at hand—though the fluctuations of the time scale made it hard to determine whether they would recognise my name if they heard it. And there was the great Lord Byron, a powerful name, a man well-known to espouse the cause of freedom. Perhaps word

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could be got to him.

Meanwhile, my first efforts must be to attract attention to myself and have myself removed from this common Bedlam in which I was shut.

In any case, I needed attention. Though my wound from the officer's ball was not much worse than a flesh wound, it hurt me and looked bad. My trousers were caked with blood. Accordingly, without ever rising from my sordid bed, I lay and groaned and babbled, and altogether gave a wonderful impression of a man in dire extremity.

Since I was one of the first to awaken, my noise was far from popular, and I received a few kicks and blows from my neighbours, in their kindly efforts to speed my recovery. Their ministrations only aided my cries. Eventually, I stood up screaming, and then pitched down and rolled over in an attitude which (I hoped) suggested death!

A warden was called. He turned me over with his foot. I moaned. Another officer was called, and I was carried away, with much clanking of keys, eventually to find myself in a small room, where I was dumped in a negligent way on a table.

A doctor came and examined me; I moaned throughout the inspection.

My wound was probed and bandaged, and then the fool of a medico bled me, evidently under the impression that it would calm a supposed fever.

As they carried away a pannier of my blood, I felt almost as bad as I pretended to be. I was then dragged into a solitary cell, locked in and left.

There I stayed for two days. I was given some repulsive food which, by the end of the second day, I trained myself to eat. It gave me a bowel disorder within the hour.

On the third day, I was marched before a prison officer, who perfunctorily asked me my name and address, and if I would confess to where I had concealed the body of Victor Frankenstein. I protested my innocence. He laughed and said, "One of our foremost counsellors is hardly likely to have an innocent man imprisoned." But he was good enough to allow me some writing materials before I was taken back to my cell, formally charged with murder.

XII.

Letter from Joseph Bodenland to Mary Godwin

My dear Mary Godwin,

Your novel found many readers of whom you never knew. This letter may never find you. But perhaps my compulsion to write in these circumstances is as strong as yours!

Nothing but disaster has attended me since I left your side.

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My one solace is that I *was* at your side. That is consolation enough for anything.

My hazy memory of your novel suggests that you were entirely too kind to Victor's betrothed, Elizabeth, and more than entirely too kind to his friend, Henry Clerval. Between them, they have had me imprisoned, on the false accusation of having murdered Victor.

My release may come any day, since Victor has but to reappear among the living for the accusation to be proved false on all sides. However, you of all people know how erratic are his movements, moved as he is by guilt and persecution. To misquote you: 'He is itinerant because he is miserable'. Can you help me maybe, by discovering his whereabouts, and perhaps persuading him—through a third party if necessary—to return to his home, or to communicate with the prison officials here? He can bear me no malice!

How much time I have had to meditate on what transpired between us! I will pass in silence over my feelings for you, for they can mean little to you at present (though I am in some doubt as to when 'at present' is), though I assure you that what briefly flowered between us one morning is a flower that will not perish, however many mornings remain.

What I will write about is the world situation in which I find myself. I bless you that you are an intellectual girl, like your mother, in an age when such spirits are rare; in my age, they are less rare, but perhaps no more effectual because of their greater numbers, and because they operate in a world where the male principal has prevailed, even over the mentalities of many of your sex. (I'd say all this differently in the language of my time! Would you like to hear it? You are an early example of Woman's Lib, baby, just like your Mom. Your cause will grab more power as time passes, boosted by the media, who always love a new slant on the sex thing. But most of those fighting girls have sold themselves out to the big operators, and work the male kick themselves, clitoris or no clitoris. End quote.)

I had put Victor down—and your poet too, I have to confess—as a liberal do-gooding trouble-maker. This troublesome wish to improve the world! "Look where it's got us!"—that was the assumption behind all I said to you.

It was too easy an assumption. I can see that now, locked in this miserable cell with no particular guarantees that anything good is ever likely to happen to me again. When Justine Moritz was in this prison, the world outside had prejudged her before her trial. Perhaps I am being prejudged in the same way, if my name is even mentioned outside.

But who would there be to

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speak for me, who would take up my case? In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, it will be different, at least in the nations of America, Japan, and Western Europe. That stone curtain will not descend which now shuts off the inmates of prison from the free world outside. Among prison inmates, I do not include debtors—but in the future, governments will not be foolish enough to imprison people merely for a debt.

How has this small improvement arisen?

(Of course, I use this particular approach to a general question because I have the subject of prison brought to my notice with a vengeance. But I fancy that if I found myself on the field of Waterloo with a foot missing, or in a dentist's chair without benefit of anaesthetic—a future form of laudanum—or faced with a work-situation in which my family were slowly being starved and degraded, then my conclusions might be the same.)

Between your age and mine, Mary, the great mass of people have become less coarse. Beautiful though your age is, many though the intellects that adorn it, and ugly though my age is, cruel many of its leaders, I believe that the period from which I come is to be preferred to yours in this respect. People have been educated to care more, upon the whole. Their consciences have been cultivated.

We no longer lock up the mentally deranged, although they were locked up until well into the twentieth century; certainly we do not allow them to be paraded for the general amusement of our population. The population would no longer be amused. (How I loved you when you said to Lord Byron, "Even the stupid hate to be made to appear foolish!"!)

We no longer hang a man because, in despair for his family, he steals a sheep or a loaf of bread. Indeed we no longer hang men for anything, or kill them by any other method. We long ago ceased to enjoy hanging as a public spectacle. Nor do we imprison children.

Nor do we any longer allow children to become little workhorses for their fathers or for any other man. Child labour was stopped before your century drew to its end. Instead, educational acts were enforced, slowly, step by step, in tune with general opinion on the issue, in accord with the dictum that politics is the art of the possible.

Indeed, the whole emphasis of education has changed. Education, except for the sons of lords, was once directed at fitting a man for a job and, cynics would add, unfitting him for life. Now, with complex machines themselves capable of performing routine jobs, education concentrates to a great extent on equipping young men and women for life, and living better and more creatively. It

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may have come too late, but it has come.

We no longer allow the old to starve when their usefulness to the community is ended. Pensions for the aged came in at the beginning of the twentieth century. Geriatry is now a subject that is afforded its own ministry in the affairs of government.

We no longer allow the weak or foolish or unfortunate to perish in the gutters of a city slum. Indeed, slums in the old sense have been almost abolished. There are now such a variety of welfare systems as would amaze you and Shelley. If a man loses his job, he receives unemployment benefits. If he falls sick, he receives sickness benefits. There is a public health service which takes care of all illnesses free of charge.

So I could go on. Although in your native country, England, there are in my epoch six times as many people as in 1816, nevertheless, the individual is guaranteed a much better chance to lead a life free from catastrophe and, if catastrophe occurs, a much better chance to be helped to recover.

(Do I make it sound like a paradise, a utopia, a socialist state such as would delight Shelley's and your father's heart? Well, remember that all this equality has only been achieved in one small part of the globe, and then mainly at the expense of the rest of the globe; and that this inequality, once such a national feature, is now such an international feature that it has led to a bitterly destructive war between rich and poor nations; and remember that that inequality is fed by an ever-hardening racial antagonism which enlightened men regard as the tragedy of our age.)

What accounts for these social improvements across the whole field of human affairs, between your age and mine? Answer: the growth of social conscience in the general mass of people.

How was that growth fostered?

The burden of Frankenstein's song is that man's concern is to put nature to rights. I believe that when his successors were actively engaged in that process, they often made devastating mistakes. Of late, my generation has perforce had to count up the debit column of all those mistakes, and in so doing has forgotten the benefits.

For the gifts of Frankenstein do not include only material things like the seat coverings which you admired in my automobile—or the automobile itself! They include all the intangible welfare gifts I have enumerated—at what I fear you will think is 'some length'! One of the direct results of science and technology has been an increase in production, and a 'spin-off' or yield of such things as anaesthetics, principles of bacteriology and immunology and hygiene, better understanding of health and illness, the provision of machines to do what women and children were earlier

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forced to do, cheaper paper, vast presses to permit the masses to read, followed by other mass-media, much better conditions in homes and factories and cities —and on and on in a never-ending list.

All these advances have been real, even when dogged by the ills of which I told you. And they have brought a change in the nature of people. I'm talking now about the masses, the great submerged part of every nation. In the western democracies, those masses have never again suffered the dire oppression that they suffered in England until almost the eighteen-fifties, when sometimes labouring men, particularly in country districts, might never have a fire in their hearths or taste meat all week, and faced death if they trapped a rabbit on the local lord-of-the-manor's land. People have been able to become softer since those ill times, thanks to the great abundance for which technology is directly responsible.

If you kick a child all his schooldays, force him to labour sixteen hours a day seven days a week, yank out his teeth with forceps when they ache, bleed him when he is ill, beat him throughout his apprenticeship, starve him when he falls on bad times, and finally let him die in the workhouse when he ages prematurely, then you have educated a man, in the best way possible, to be *indifferent*. Indifferent to himself and to others.

Between your age and mine, dear Mary, a re-education has taken place. The benefits of a growing scientific spirit have formed an overwhelming force behind that re-education.

Of course, that's not the end of the story. To have an overwhelming force is one thing, to direct it quite another.

And the chief direction has come in your century—in your heroic century!—from poets and novelists. It is your husband-to-be who declares (or will declare, and of course I may misquote) that poets are *mirrors of the tremendous shadows which futurity casts upon the present*, and the unacknowledged legislators of the world. He is absolutely right, save in one particular: he should have specifically included novelists with poets.

But in your present, in 1816, novels are not much regarded. Their great day is to come in the next generation, for the novel becomes the great art form of the nineteenth century, from Los Angeles to New York, from London and Edinburgh to Moscow and Budapest. The novel becomes the flower of humanism.

The names of these directors of change in your country alone are still recalled, novelists who seized on the great scientifico-social changes of their day and moulded a more sensitive appreciation of life to respond to it: Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell, the Bronte sisters, Charles Reade, George Heredith,

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Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, your friend Peacock, many others. And especially the beloved Charles Dickens, who perhaps did more than any man in his century—including the great legislators and engineers—to awaken a new conscience in his fellow men. Dickens and the others are the great novelists—and every other western country can offer rival names, from Jules Verne to Dostoevski and Tolstoi—who truly mirror the tremendous futurities and shape the hearts of people. And you, my dear Mary, respected though your name is—you are insufficiently regarded as the first of that invaluable breed, preceeding them by at least one whole generation!

Thanks to the work of your moral forces, powered by the social change which always and only comes from technological innovation, the future from which I come is not entirely uninhabitable. On the one hand, the sterility of machine culture and the terrible isolation often felt by people even in over-crowded cities; on the other hand, a taking for granted of many basic rights and freedoms which in your day have not even been thought of.

How I think of them now! My case can attract no eager newsmen. I can call on no congressmen to worry on my behalf. I may expect no mass media to crusade, no millions of strangers to become suddenly familiar with my name and anxious for my cause. I'm stuck in a cell with a reeking bucket, and two hundred years to wait before justice can be done, and be seen to be done. Do you wonder I now see the positive side of the technological revolution?!

If you can summon Victor, as Prospero summoned his unhappy servants, or help me in any other way, then I'll be grateful. But hardly more grateful than I am already, if grateful is an adequate enough word! Meanwhile, I send you these meditations, hoping they may help you to continue your great book.

And with the meditations, less perishable than a willow leaf,

My love,

Joe Bodenland

XIII.

SOME OF THE grand sidereal events of the universe are more accessible at night. With humanity forced into the undignified retreat of its collective beds, the processes of Earth come into their own. Or so I have found.

Exactly why it should be so, I do not know. Certainly night is a more solemn period than day, when the withdrawal of the sun's influence enforces a caesura to activity. But I never had any terror of the dark, and was not like Shakespeare's man, 'in the night, imagining some fear, How easy is a bush supposed a bear'. . . So

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my theory is that while we are in Earth's shadow and intended to be dreaming, our minds may be wider open than by day. In other words, some of that subconscious world which has access to us in dreams may seep through under cloak of night, giving us a better apprehension of the dawn of the world, when we were children —or when mankind was in its childhood.

However that may be, I woke before dawn next day and, just by lying alert on my miserable bunk, was able to let my intelligence spread like mist beyond the narrow confines of the prison. My senses took me beyond the bars that confined me. I was aware of the cold stone outside, the little huddling rooms of the citizens of Geneva, and of the natural features beyond, the great lake and the mountains, whose peaks would already be saluting a day still unperceived in the city. A barnyard cock crowed distantly —that most medieval of sounds.

I knew something was wrong.

Something had awakened me. But what?

My senses strained again.

Again the cockerel, its cry a reminder to me—like the little cake that Proust dipped in his tea—that time is a complex thing, stronger than any tide, yet so fragile it can be traversed instantaneously, on a familiar sound or smell. Had another timeslip occurred?

There was something wrong! I sat up, huddling my blanket to my chest.

Not so much a sound as a sensation that a whole spectrum of sound was missing. And then I knew! It was snowing!

It was snowing in July!

That was why I held my blanket about me. It was cold, whereas the cell had been stiflingly hot when I fell asleep. It was the cold that accounted for my sluggishness in detecting what was wrong.

Snow was falling steadily over the prison, over Geneva, in mid-summer. . . I hauled myself up and peered out of the bars.

My view was limited to sight of a wall, a tower over it, and a small patch of sky. But I saw torches moving, less powerful than lighted matches against the first crack of tarnished gold in the eastern sky. And there was the snow, grey against grey.

Then the sound, very distant, of a bugle.

A faint smell of woodsmoke.

And another sound, more alarming. The sound of water. Perhaps always an alarming noise for a man trapped in a small space.

How long I stood there, trembling with cold and a nameless apprehension, I have no idea. I listened to attendant noises coming on gradually—the scuffles and grunts and curses of men near at hand, a more distant din of shod feet moving at the double, shouted commands. And always

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that sound of water, growing fast. People were running now, in the corridor outside my cell.

Panic communicates itself without words. I threw myself against the cell door and hammered and shouted, crying to be let out. Then the water hit the prison!

It arrived in a great flood, a shock-wave of water that could be felt and heard. A second's lull, then such a din! Shouts, screams, and the thunder of inundation.

In a moment, a wave must have swept across the prison yard outside. It struck the wall, and a great cascade burst upwards, much of it to come flying through the cell window! The fright of it started me hammering at the door again. The whole prison was in a confusion of sound, with the echo of slamming doors added to all the rest of the din.

And worse was still to come. The water that spurted through my window was a mere splash. More come welling and flooding under the door, so that I suddenly found it all about my ankles. It was icy.

I jumped on to my bunk, still yelling for release. The light filtering in was enough to reveal a darkly gleaming surface of water, turbulent, continually rising. Already it was almost on a level with my straw palliasse.

My cell was on the ground floor—slightly below the level of the ground, in fact, so that the window had afforded me, on occasion, a view of a warder's waist, belt, keys, and truncheon, as he marched by. Now another wave splashed in. As I looked up, I saw that water was beginning to slop in and trickle down the wall. The yard outside must be flooded to a depth of about three feet! In no time, all prisoners on my level would be drowning—the water outside was already almost above our heads!

Now the din from my fellow prisoners multiplied. I was not the only one who had made this uncomfortable observation!

Splashing through the dark flood, I was again throwing myself at the door when a key turned in its great lock and it opened.

Who set me free—warder or prisoner—I have no idea. But there was someone at least at that dreadful place who had a thought for others than himself!

The passage was a ghastly limbo between death and life, a place where men fought and screamed in semi-darkness to get out, splashing up to their crutches in fast-moving water. And it was a matter of fighting! To lose your foothold was to be trodden down. A man from a cell ahead of mine, a slight figure, was knocked aside by two more powerful men working together. He went down. The crowd poured on, and over him, and he fell beneath the flood.

When I got to the spot, I groped beneath the water to try and find him and drag him up, but could find nothing. Strong though my anxiety was to save

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him, nothing could force me to duck my head voluntarily beneath that stinking spate! Then I found what had happened to him, for there were two unseen steps down. I also missed my footing and went plunging forward; only by luck managing to keep myself upright.

Now the water was chest-high—more than that as we struggled round a corner, to meet a great frothing wave! But a wider corridor joined here, leading to another wing, and then there was a broader flight of steps up, and a rail to grip. It was like climbing a waterfall, but there was a warder at the top, clinging to the railing and yelling to us at the top of his voice to us to hurry—as if we needed such encouragement!

What a scene in the yard! What filth and terror and tumult!. The water was littered with obstacles, and there were painful things below the water to strike oneself on. But the level was lower and the rush of the flood less severe than in more restricted surroundings, so that that insurmountable dread of drowning gradually subsided.

The gates of the prison had been flung open, after which it was up to everyone to save themselves. It was still snowing. At last I was under the shadow of the prison arch, splashing and gasping with other ill-glimpsed men. Then we were out of the prison. I caught a horrifying glimpse of a great sea stretching among the buildings, of people and animals weltering in it, before turning with the rest of the mob in a rush for higher ground.

XIV.

HOURS LATER, resting myself and my battered legs in a shallow cave on a hillside, I returned to something like my senses.

Although it would be mad to claim that I felt happy, my first feeling was one of cheer that I had at least escaped from prison. Presumably, the time would come, after the crisis was over, when the prison authorities would institute a hunt to recover their prisoners. But that time must remain a few days ahead yet, while everywhere still lay in the throes of a natural disaster—the nature of which had yet to be determined—and while the snow still fell as thickly as it did. I would prepare myself for flight later, for I was determined not to be caught again; meanwhile, I needed warmth and food.

In my pockets was a disposable butane lighter. There was no trouble in that respect. All I needed was fuel, and I would have a fire going.

I hobbled out onto the hillside. My left knee throbbed from a wound it had received in my escape, but for the moment I ignored it. Visibility was down to a few yards. I stood in a white wil-

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derness, and perceived that to gather wood for burning in such conditions was not easy.

However, I applied myself. Enduring the descent of great slides of snow on my back and shoulders, I rooted about the bases of small trees. So I gradually amassed armfuls of small twigs, which I carried back to my cave. My search took me further from base with each load. After four loads, I came across footprints in the snow!

Like Robinson Crusoe on his island, I trembled at the sight. The prints were large and made by strongly fortified boots. So thickly was the snow falling that I knew they could only just have been made, probably within the past five minutes. Somebody was close by me on the hillside!

Looking about, I could see nothing. The snow was like a curtain. An image of a great figure with obscured face and mighty vigour returned unpleasantly to my mind. But I went on grubbing for wood.

I worked my way—somewhat fearfully, I admit—into a gloomy stand of pines, and there found several fallen branches which I was able to drag back to the cave. They would suffice for a respectable blaze.

The fire burnt up without much trouble. The warmth was welcome, although now I was nervous anew, thinking my fire might attract anything lurking near at hand. I was too nervous to go looking for birds or small animals which, I fancied, might be caught half-frozen in the undergrowth. Instead, I crouched near my hissing flames, nursing my leg and keeping one hand close to a sturdy length of branch.

When the marauder came, I glimpsed him through drifting snow and smoke. No sound—the universal white blanket saw to that. Only silence, as I rose in fear, weapon in hand, to confront him. He seemed to me huge and shaggy, with his breath hanging about his face in the chilly air.

Then I was struck from behind! The blow landed on my shoulder. It had been aimed at my head, but I moved at the last second, prompted by some unclassified intuition of survival. I caught a glimpse of my assailant of his ragged and ferocious face, as he paused before hurling himself at me. In that instant, I brought up my branch, so that he caught it right in the face.

He fell back, but the other man, the one I had seen first, came running forward. I whirled my branch. He was armed with a stout length of post, which came up and broke my blow. Before I could deliver another, he had grasped my wrist and we were fighting face to face, nearly falling into the fire as we did so.

I glimpsed the other man getting up and tried to break and run. But they had me! I was tripped. I curled up and kicked out wildly at their shins, but I was at

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their mercy now. They hacked me in the ribs and then proceeded to batter me about the head.

The fight—the very life!—went out of me. Sprawled in the snow and dirt, I lost command of my senses. It was not complete unconsciousness; instead, I drifted in a helpless state; unable to move. In some broken and unhappy way, I was aware that the two villains stopped kicking and beating me. I was aware of their voices but not of what they said. Their words came to me only as a series of hoarse gasping noises. And I was aware that they were doing something with my fire. I was even aware that they were leaving, but the *interpretation* of all their actions only filtered through some while later. It was as if, owing to the punishment I had received, all the close and companionable cells of my brain had been spaced round the frozen world, so that it took half an hour for intelligence to march from one department to the next. My personal space-time was as dislocated as the impersonal one.

At length, I did manage to roll over and sit up. Then, after a further interval, I was able to drag myself into my little cave. I had a flimsy recollection of being afraid of getting drowned; now I had a flimsy suspicion that I might be buried under snow and never rise again to the surface.

It was the cold that forced me to move. I saw then, through the one eye that would open, that my fire was scattered, that only a few whisps of smoke rose here and there. Later, the knowledge filtered through to me that the two ruffians—escaped prisoners like myself, without a doubt—had attacked me solely on account of my fire. To them, it represented infinite riches, well worth committing murder for.

And was it not infinite riches? Unless blindness was setting in, darkness was. I would freeze to death this night unless I had some warmth.

And there was something else. A noise I recognized among the eternal wastes of silence. Recognised? What ancestral thing in me prompted me to know the cry of wolves?

Somehow or other, working on hands and knees, I drew more branches before my little retreat. Somehow or other, I got a flame going again.

There I lay, half-roasted on one side, freezing on the other, in a sort of trance, more abjectly miserable than I can tell. If I died on this hillside, I would not even know where or when the hillside was.

At some point in that dreadful night, the wolves came very close. I feebly pushed more wood on my fire to make a brighter blaze. And at some point I was *visited*.

I was in no fit state to move a muscle. However, I managed to prize my one good eye open. The fire had died down, though sev-

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eral branches still glowed red. Someone stood carelessly among the embers, as if having his flesh charred was the least of his worries. All I could see were feet and legs, and they looked enormous. The legs were clumsily encases in gaiters.

In a feeble effort at self-preservation, I put up one arm to ward off a blow, but the arm fell down as if it would have nothing to do with such an idea. I could see my hand, lying palm upwards and seemingly a great distance from me. Huge scarred hands thrust something into my hand, a voice spoke to me.

Much later, searching my memory, I thought I had heard it say in deep and melancholy tones, "Here, fellow outcast from society, if thou canst survive this night, draw strength from one who did not!" Or something to that effect—all I recalled incontrovertantly was that old-fashioned construction, "if thou canst". . .

Then the great figure was gone, swallowed as soon as it turned, into the drifting dark. So too my senses went, into their own brand of night.

XV.

WHEN I WOKE, I was not dead. I hauled myself into a sitting position and peered about with my one good eye. The fire was out, or all but, and my limbs felt as lifeless. But I knew I could manage to stagger to my feet and find fresh kindling. I felt a little better, and was aware of hunger pangs in my stomach.

Then it was I thought to look about on the ground near me, recalling that strange visit—had it happened—in the night. A dead hare lay on the trampled ground, its neck twisted. Someone had brought me food. This was the thing that "did not survive the night".

Someone or something had had compassion on me. . .

My thought processes were still numb, but I got feebly into action, moving more and more strongly as I sought out wood for a fresh fire. The sight of the flames leaping up did much to hearten me. Swinging my arms, I got a little circulation back into my aching body. I pressed snow against my bruised face, and managed to melt more snow in my mouth to quench my thirst. Eventually, I was strong enough to concentrate on tearing the hare into pieces, impaling the joints on sticks, and thrusting them into the glowing heat of my fire.

How marvellously good they smelt as they seethed, bubbled and cooked! It was the smell as much as the taste which convinced me that I was still Joe Bodenland, and still destined to struggle on among the living.

The snow stopped falling, but it remained intolerably cold. I decided to strike out while I could,

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and hope to find help and possibly shelter. It was an instinct as much as rational decision —thought was still far beyond me. Indeed, the disintegration of my old personality had taken another long step forward. I was now just impersonally a man, striving against the elements.

Moving with no clear sense of direction, I arrived at last at a wooden hut, set in a clearing in the forest which covered that part of the mountain.

The pure white drifts of snow against the door of the hut convinced me that nobody had been that way recently. After clearing away the snow, I managed to enter the hut.

Inside were a few necessities, a large bearskin, a stove, some kindling wood, a chopper, even a very hard garlic sausage hanging from a beam. Luxury indeed! In one corner hung a crucifix, with a Bible lying below it.

I stayed there for three days, until the snow began to melt, dripping in stealthy drops from my little roof. By that time, my body was recovering, my damaged eye was seeing again.

Cleaning myself to the best of my ability, I left the hut and set out downhill, in what I hoped was the direction of Geneva. My attempts to look like a normal human being again were evidently not too successful—at one point on my journey, I came on a man crouching over a small brook from which he was trying to drink. Looking up, he saw me, and at once jumped up and ran crying in terror into the bushes!

Now that my thought-processes were working again, I was eager to discover what dreadful catastrophe had overtaken this part of the world. I could only suppose that the collapse of space-time in my own day was slowly spreading outwards from source, like a bloodstain spreading across an old sheet, threatening many deep-seated continuities. The very idea raised an image of a gradual disruption of the whole fabric of history until, at some stage, the rupture would seriously interfere with the creative processes of Earth themselves. And then, perhaps far back in the dim Permian Age, sufficient harm might be done for the further development of life forms to cease.

No doubt that was too gloomy a picture. Possibly the timeslips in my own day were already dying out. Perhaps the damage here was only minor, a last tremor before the fabric of space-time mended again.

Whatever had happened in space, I had reason to believe that the displacement in time must have been relatively slight. For what had visited me in my weakest hour and provided me with food if not that damned creation of Frankenstein's? And, if it were so, then that dream of retribution was evidently not yet played out. Surely it was no later than the winter of 1817?

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On that I should soon be able to check. Meanwhile, one thing at least appeared certain. If I had encountered Frankenstein's creation, then the creator himself could not be far away. To him at least I could turn for assistance. He would be obliged to offer me some aid, knowing I had information to help him in his pursuit of the monster.

Accordingly, I would go to see him first. Taking care to avoid certain members of his household. . .

So the rational mind lays its rational plans. And then I came to a promontory of rock from which I had a view of Geneva, and was shaken.

The city was there, surely enough, but the lake had gone, and so had the Jura beyond it!

Instead of the lake, my gaze rested upon a broken expanse of scrub. Here and there were dotted beggarly trees or thorns and, right in the far distance, something white gleamed—sand or ice; but, for the rest, there was no predominating feature on which an eye could fix. No roads, no villages, not so much as a solitary building, not even an animal. I saw a river-bed, biting deep into the land, but nothing to suggest that a lake had ever been there or that man had ever trod there.

I stood staring for a long while. There must have been another timeslip. But where and *when* had this unattractive slab of terrain arrived from? So dismal was it that I thought first of Byron's prophetic poem of the death of light, and then of the lands that lie North of the line of the Arctic Circle. The displacement looked to be of considerable extent, much larger than the chunk of 2020 which had brought me to 1816, or the chunk of some mysterious medieval land which had arrived earlier on my front doorstep. I could see no limit to the desolation ahead.

For a while, I turned over in my mind the notion that these timeslips affected me alone. I was weary, and my brain was not working effectively. Then I realised that almost everyone in what I had once regarded as my own day was probably in a similar predicament, that the shattering effects of the war had probably distributed most of 2020 back and forward throughout history!

The reflection implied that this tract of wild land might have come from my own time, the epicentre of the disturbance, and so might be instrumental in restoring me to my own day!

So I resumed my descent towards a much-changed Geneva.

The gates of Plainpalais, by now familiar, were wide. Beyond them, everything was chaos. It was mid-morning, and the streets were thronged with people and animals.

The flood had caused tremendous havoc, breaking down many buildings. Though it had gone now, its mark was everywhere,

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not least in a great dirty universal tide-line it had painted, seven feet above ground level. That mark decorated humble dwellings and proud buildings, churches and statues.

Now the streets were dry again. So the flooding had not been from the lake—which hitherto I had assumed to be the case; maybe it had come from the river whose bed, now dried, I had seen from my eminence on the hillside.

This hypothesis was roughly confirmed by what I saw when I came to the quayside, or what had been the quayside when the lake existed. The level of the new arid ground was several feet above that of the land on which Geneva stood. The river, suddenly materialising, would have poured straight down into the streets, flooding everything, including the prison.

Something had already been done to mend its path of devastation. I saw no bodies, although I did not doubt that many people had drowned. But the damaged houses were pathetic to see, and wreckage was still being pulled from alleyways and lanes.

A few coins remained in my pocket. I spent almost all of them on a visit to a barber and on a meal, after which I felt my humanity returning. About my ruined clothes I felt less concern, for I noticed that the flood had made many people shabby.

There was the Frankenstein house! It was too solidly built to have suffered serious damage. All the same, it bore the dirty tidemark along its facade, and the garden had been very much beaten down. All vegetation was dying, after July had felt the breath of January.

Remembering what had happened to me the last time I entered this unhappy house, remembering too that I was an escaped jailbird, whom most of the Frankenstein menage would not hesitate to give back into custody, I decided that the wisest course was to keep the place under observation and wait until I could be sure to speak to Victor. So I settled myself in a small tavern just down the street. From one of its windows, I could see the Frankenstein gate.

The hours passed and there was no sign of my quarry. A servant came out of the side gate and returned later, but that was all. As I waited, doubts crowded into my mind. Perhaps I should have formed a better plan; perhaps I should have made instead for the Villa Diodati, to see if I could secure any friends and allies there. At least it would have given me the prospect of seeing Mary Shelley again. Her presence had never left me—throughout my worst hours, her pleasant entrances solaced my misery. Just to see her again!

I was only a refugee at present. With Victor's assistance, it might be possible to retrieve my car; I thought also that I could sell him

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scientific information, and so escape from my destitute condition. Then would be the time to go seeking dear Mary again. So I stuck obstinately to my original plan.

With dusk, I was forced to leave the tavern, and paced up and down the muddy street for warmth. The villa opposite the Frankenstein mansion was deserted. Maybe the family fled after the flood, or maybe they had all been drowned. I climbed into the garden and crouched in the porch, from whence I had a good view of the street.

A dim light came on behind a blind in the Frankenstein mansion. That would be Elizabeth's room.

I sat looking at that light for almost two hours, by which time I was desperate. I decided to break into the house in whose porch I was sheltering and search for food and clothes.

Some of the panes in the lower windows had been shattered by flood. Putting my hand in one window, I turned the catch and forced open the window. I climbed on to the sill, paused, jumped in.

I was immediately seized. Some foul glutinous thing got me by the legs and ankles. I staggered and slipped in it, falling against a sofa to which I clung. Gasping, I pulled out my lighter and held it above me to look round the room.

The room was silted up with mud, several inches deep in most places and very deep in one corner. All the furniture had been thrown together, tables and sofas and chairs all in one filthy jumble. Nothing remained as it had been, except for some pictures aslant on the wall. When I got up to walk, glass crunched under my feet.

In the hall lay a body. It was half-hidden by mud, so that I trod on its legs before I realised. I peered down and for a moment believed that I had come on Percy Bysshe Shelley. How to account for this impression, I do not know, although the body belonged to a young man of about Shelley's age. Perhaps he had been so fascinated by the sight of the advancing waters that he had delayed his escape too long.

I climbed the stairs. Nothing had been disturbed here —although the air of desertion and my timid light lent the place a sinister aspect. I tried to banish the idea of a drowned Shelley by conjuring up the memory of Mary stepping into Lake Geneva and looking back at me over her shoulder; instead came a more ferocious image—that of a gigantic man leaping towards me: not the best picture to help one through these present circumstances.

Standing on the upper landing, I could hear a faint continuous noise. It was the sound of mud and moisture, the kind of sound which conjures up bare seashores with the tide far out and clear skies overhead. Mastering my fears, I began to open doors.

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The young man's room was easy to identify. I went in. The blind was down at the window. An oil lamp stood by the unmade bed. I lit it, turning the wick low.

He had plenty of clothes he would never need again. I cleaned my legs off on his bed covering and selected a pair of rather fancy trousers from his wardrobe. The only pair of shoes which would fit me was a pair of ski-boots. They were dry and strong; I was pleased with them. I also found what I took to be a sporting pistol, with a beautifully engraved silver stock. I pocketed it, although I had no idea of how it worked. More usefully, I found coin and notes on the dressing-table, and pocketed them.

Now I felt ready for anything. I sat back on the bed, trying to decide if I would not confront the Frankenstein household openly. After the catastrophe, they would hardly find it as easy to summon police as they had done before. Thus reasoning, I fell asleep. Such is the soothing effect of property.

XVI.

THE GLISTERING SOUND of mud was still in the house when I woke, sitting up angrily, for I had not intended to sleep. The lamp still burned. I turned it as low as possible and looked round the blind at Frankenstein's house. No light showed there. I had no idea of how long I had slept.

It was time to leave. One lot of housebreaking must be followed by another. I would enter the house opposite, and determine whether Victor was still about or not.

Leaving by a window on the stairs, I was able to avoid the mud that carpeted the ground floor.

At the front gate, I paused. The sound of a horse in harness, of its hoof idly striking a stone! Peering between the uprights of the gate, I saw that the horse stood before Frankenstein's gate harnessed to a phaeton—or so I believe that type of carriage was called; it was open and had four wheels. It may have been the horse that roused me from my sleep.

I got into the street and stood in the shadows, waiting to see what happened. In a moment, two figures appeared dimly by the side of the house. A muttered word or two. One disappeared back into the darkness. The other stepped boldly forward, came through the side gate, and climbed into the phaeton. Dark though it was, I had no doubt but that it was Victor Frankenstein; the darkness surrounding his present movements was so characteristic of him.

Directly he was in, he jerked impatiently at the reins, called to the horse, and they were off! I ran across the road and jumped up, clinging to the side of the

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phaeton. He reached over for a whip in its cup.

"Frankenstein! It is I, Bodenland! You remember me? I must speak to you!"

"You, damn you! I thought it was—well, no matter! What the devil do you want at this hour of night?"

"I mean you no harm. I have to speak to you." I climbed in beside him. In a fury, he lashed the horse on.

"This is no hour for conversation. I do not wish to be seen here, do you understand me? I will set you down at the West Gate."

"You never wish to be seen—that's part of your guilt! Because of your elusiveness, I was charged with your murder. Did you know that? They shut me in your filthy prison! Did you know that? Did you make any attempt to get me free?"

I had intended to adopt a more conciliatory approach, but his whole manner made me angry.

"I have my own affairs, Bodenland. Yours mean nothing to me. People murder and get murdered—so they have done since the world began. It's one of the things that must be altered. But I'm too busy to concern myself with your affairs."

"My affairs are yours, Victor. You will have to accept me. I know—I know about the monster that haunts your life!"

He had been driving tremendously. Now he slackened pace and turned the pallid oval of his face towards me.

"So you hinted when last we met! Don't think I didn't hope that you might be buried in the prison for ever, or hanged for the murder of which you were accused. I have miseries enough. . . My life is doomed. I've worked only for the common good, humbly trying to advance knowledge. . ."

As in our previous meeting, he had switched rapidly from defiance to a defensive self-pity. We had reached the city gate now. I saw the difference the flood had made. The great doors had been wrenched off their hinges; and anyone could come and go at all hours. We bowled through them, and out into open country. Frankenstein had made no effort to set me down. So I had an insight into his feelings. He desperately needed to talk to me, to have me as a confessor if not to gain my active help, but could not see the way to come to terms with me; his need to accept was in conflict with his wish to reject. Recalling what I had glimpsed of his relationships with both Henry Clerval and Elizabeth, it occurred to me that this conflict probably characterised all his friendships. The reflection spurred me to take a less over-riding line with him.

"Your good intentions do you credit, Victor—and yet you are always in flight!" There were crates with us in the carriage; he was escaping from home again.

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"I'm in flight against the evil of the world. I cannot take you where I am going. I must put you down."

"Please allow me to come. I shall not be shocked, because I already know what you are up to. Can't you see that I would be better off with you than going to Elizabeth and telling her the truth?"

"You're no more than a blackmailer!"

"My role is not a glamorous one. I am forced into it, as you are forced into yours."

To that he said nothing. It began to snow lightly again, and we had no protection from it. The horse took a side-track which led uphill. It began to labour, so that Victor spoke encouragingly to it. Together, horse and driver conspired to surmount the hill. All I could do was stay silent.

Finally, we bumped to the top. As we pulled through a grove of bedraggled trees, the horse shied violently and stood up on its hind legs, neighing, between the shafts, so that we were tipped backwards.

"Curse you!" cried Frankenstein, striking out with the whip to one side. Then he applied the lash to the horse's flank, and we were off at speed. "Did you see it? Where *I* am, *it* is! It haunts me!"

"I saw nothing!"

"Inhuman and abhorrent thing!—it was steaming! Even this cold weather cannot quell it. It thrives on anything that man detests."

Our present track led to a tower. It loomed dimly in the night and snow. Frankenstein jumped down and led the horse, escorting him through the ruins of outer walls until the tower stood above us. I could make out that it was cylindrical. Behind it, a square building had been added, an ugly piece of architecture with only one window, slitted and barred, set close by enormous double doors. On these doors, Frankenstein hammered impatiently, and the echo went rolling away through the night. I found myself looking about for steaming strangers.

The doors opened and a man appeared with a bull's-eye lantern.

We made haste inside, horse, carriage, and all. The man closed and barred and bolted the doors behind us.

"Give me a hand with these crates, Yet," Frankenstein ordered.

The man called Yet was large and solid, built with an ugly, muscular body. His skull, which protruded above a filthy cravat, was so small that the features of his face seemed to more than cover it; he was bald, which added to the grotesque effect. His lips were so thick that they met the end of his nose and so wide that they became lost in his side-whiskers. He said nothing, simply rolling his eyes and drag-

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ging Frankenstein's crates from the phaeton. Then he went to unharness the horse.

"You can do that later. Bring the crates up to the laboratory!"

Frankenstein went ahead and I followed. Then came Yet, with a case balanced on one shoulder. Without needing to be told, I knew I had reached Frankenstein's secret laboratory!

XVII.

We climbed the tower stairs. They were well-lit. The few windows we passed were blocked up, so as to prevent light escaping. The first floor was full of machines, most noticeably a steam-engine with rocking beam. This powered a number of small engines with gleaming copper coils. It was only later, when I had the chance of a closer look, that I realised these smaller machines were generating electricity for the tower. Steam-driven pistons turned horseshoe magnets which rotated inside the coils, to generate alternating current. Although my history was vague on the point, I believed that Victor was—in this development as elsewhere—some decades ahead of his time.

The floor above contained Victor's living quarters. Here he bid me stay, saying that there was only the laboratory overhead, and that he did not wish me to enter there. While he went ahead to direct Yet, I looked about me.

His quarters were unremarkable enough. I noted a few handsome items of furniture—a desk and a four-poster among a welter of packing-cases and paper. To one side, a kitchen had been improvised, and was partly shielded from the rest of the room with an embroidered curtain, perhaps as a gesture towards the more gentlemanly side of Victor's life. I took the chance to examine one of the electric lights. It was an arc-lamp with carbon electrodes parallel and vertical, the alternating current of course ensuring that the electrodes would wear down equally. The lamp was enclosed in a frosted glass globe to diffuse the light.

Victor's books attracted my attention. There were old vellum-bound folios of Serapion, Cornelius Agrippa and Paracelsus, and many alchemical works. They were by far outnumbered by recent volumes on chemistry, electricity, galvanism, and natural philosophy. Among Continental names I did not know, such as Waldman and Krempe, I was interested to see British ones, including those of Joseph Priestley, represented by his "History of Electricity" of 1767; and Erasmus Darwin, by "The Botanic Garden," "Phytologia," and "The Temple of Nature." Many books lay open, carelessly scattered about, so that I could see how Frankenstein had scribbled notes

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in their margins.

I had picked up a box of letters and was glancing at them, when Frankenstein returned from above and caught me. I said, "You have a considerable library here."

"My important possessions have been removed to this tower. It is the one place where I can remain private and uninterrupted. You are holding letters from the great Henry Cavendish. Unfortunately, he is dead now, but his knowledge of electricity was great. I wish I had his brain. Why he never troubled to publish his knowledge, I do not know, except that he was an aristocrat, and so perhaps considered it beneath him to publish. We corresponded, and he taught me almost all I know about the conductivity of electricity, and its effect on those bodies through which it passes. Cavendish was far ahead of his times."

I uttered some platitude or other. "You seem to be ahead of your time, too."

He dismissed the remark. "I still correspond with Michael Faraday. Do you know that name? He visited me here in Geneva in 1814, with Lord and Lady Davy. Lord Humphry Davy was full of remarkable knowledge. For instance, he taught me how to use nitrous oxide for its effect in destroying physical pain. I do so. What other man throughout Europe does the same? Even more vital to the work I am doing—"

He drew himself up, "I am riding my hobby horse. Mr. Bodenland, what are we to do with you? Let me make it plain I do not want you or need you here. If you have information to sell, be so good as to state your price, that I may be left in privacy. My work must go ahead."

"No, that is what must not happen! I am here to warn you that your work must stop. I have certain knowledge that it will lead only to further grief. It has already led to grief, but that is just a beginning."

His face was pale, his hands were clenched, in the bitter light from the arcs.

"Who are you to act as my conscience? What is this knowledge of the future you bear?"

"Do not think of me as your adversary—he already exists on Earth. I wish merely to aid you, and ask your aid. Since I was imprisoned because of you, it is only common human benevolence that you should help me now. Tell me first, what happened to the world when I was in prison. Tell me what the date is, and tell me what the new lands are where once Lake Leman was."

"You don't even know that much?" His manner relaxed, as if he felt he could cope with ignorance, if not defiance. "This is July still, though you would not judge as much. The temperature dropped as soon as the frigid lands appeared. They surround most of the environs of Geneva. As to

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what they are, the academics are still arguing about that. They have posted off to Baron Cuvier and Goethe and Voltaire and I know not whom else, but to date have received no answer. Indeed, there is a growing suspicion that Paris and Weimar, and a good many other cities, have ceased to exist. The frigid lands, to my way of thinking, provide good support of the Catastrophe Theory of Earth's evolution. Despite Erasmus Darwin—"

"This is July of 1816?"

"Indeed."

"And if the lake has gone, what of the lake shores eastward? I mean in particular the Villa Diodati, where the poet Milton once stayed? Has it been swallowed by the frigid lands?"

"How should I know? It is of no interest to me. Your questions—"

"Wait! You know of Lord Byron, of course. Do you know of another poet called Percy Shelley?"

"Of course! A poet of science like Marcus Aurelius, a follower of Darwin, and a better writer than that verse-adventurer, Byron. Let me show you how well I know my Shelley!" And he began to quote, dramatically gesturing in the manner of the time.

" 'Among the ruined temples there,

'Stupendous columns, and wild images

'Of more than man, where marble daemons watch

'The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men

'Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around,

'He lingered, pouring on memorials

'Of the world's youth—' Gigantic bones, no doubt, of antediluvian animals. How does it go on?. . .

" 'And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind

'Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw

'The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.' A poetic echo of my own researches! Is that not fine stuff, Bodenland?"

"I can see why it appeals to you. Victor Frankenstein, Shelley's future wife, Mary Godwin, will publish a novel about you, using you as a dire example of the way man becomes isolated from nature when he seeks to control nature. Be warned—desist from your experiments!"

He took my arm and said, in friendly terms, "Take care what you say, sir." Yet was just climbing through the room on the spiral stair, bearing the last of the packing cases up to the laboratory. "There is no need to enlighten my servant as well as me. He will prepare food for us when he comes down, so mind what you say in his presence."

"I presume he knows of that—*doppelganger* of yours outside?"

"He knows there is a daemon in the forest which seeks to destroy me. He knows less of its

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true nature than you seem to!"

"Isn't that terrible shadow over your life enough to make you understand that you should desist from further experiment?"

"Shelley understood better than you the passionate quest for truth which over-rides any other considerations in the heart of those who would open the secrets of nature, whether scientists or poets. My responsibility must be to that truth, not to society, which is corrupt. Moral considerations are the responsibility of others to pontificate on; I am more concerned with the advancement of knowledge. Did the man who first harnessed the wind in a sail know that his discovery would be perverted into armadas of sailing ships sent out to destroy and conquer? No! How could he foresee that? He had to bestow his new knowledge on mankind; that they might prove unworthy of it as an entirely different question."

Seeing that Yet returned to the room and went behind the curtain to prepare us the meal Frankenstein had promised, he lowered his voice and continued, "I bestow my gift of the secret of life upon mankind. They must make of it what they will. If your argument were to prevail, and to have prevailed, then mankind would still be living in primitive ignorance; habited in the skins of animals, for fear of new things."

The argument he used was still being used in the time from which I came, give or take a little rodomontade. I was sick to counter it, since I saw a glimmer of enjoyment in his eye; he had said it all before, and liked saying it.

"Logic will not sway you, I know. You are in the grip of an obsession. It is useless for me to point out that scientific curiosity by itself is as irresponsible as the curiosity of a child. It amounts to meddling, no more. You have to accept responsibility for the fruits of your actions, in the scientific field as elsewhere. You say you have bestowed your gift of the secret of life on mankind, but in fact you have done nothing of the sort. I happen to know that you have created life through some accident—yes, Victor, an accident, for all your deliberate intent, because understanding of flesh, limb, and organ grafts, of immunology, and a dozen other ologies, will not come for several generations. Yours is luck, not knowledge. Besides, how have you *bestowed* this gift? In the most beggarly way possible! By keeping the pride of achievement entirely to yourself and letting only the foul consequences of your activities out on the community! Your younger brother William strangled, remember, your excellent servant Justine Moritz wrongly hanged for his death, remember? Are these the gifts you so grandly claim to have bestowed on mankind! If mankind knew to whom it should be grateful, don't you think they would

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come storming up the hill and burn down your tower with all its foul secrets?"

My speech had touched him! I saw in him again that curious crumbling, a moral crumbling that was evident when he spoke again, almost in a whining tone.

"Who are you to preach at me? You don't have my fears, my burdens! Why do you add to my miseries by haunting me and confronting me with my sins?"

At this juncture, Yet appeared and stood stolidly at Frankenstein's elbow, bearing a tray. Frankenstein took it automatically and dismissed the man with a curt gesture.

As he set plates of cold meat, potato, and onion before us, he said. "You don't know how I am threatened. My creature, my invention, in whom I instilled the gift of life, escaped from my care. In captivity, he would have caused no pain, would have remained ignorant of his lot. In freedom, he managed to hide away in the wilds and educate himself. Education should only be bestowed on the few. Few are they who can manage to live with ideas! My—my monster, if you will, learnt to talk and even learnt to read. He found a leathern portmanteau containing books. Was that my fault?"

He had recovered his composure, and faced up to me with a chill warmth.

"So it befell that he read Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and discovered the nature of love. He read Plutarch's *Lives*, and so discovered the nature of human struggle. And, most unfortunately, he read Milton's great poem, *Paradise Lost*, from which he discovered religion. You can imagine how damaging such great books were, casting their spells on a completely untutored mind!"

"Untutored! How can you claim that? Isn't your creature's brain stolen from a corpse that once had life and thought?"

"Pah; nothing's left from the previous existence—only the mere lees and dregs of thought, dreams of past-time that the creature does not heed, or not half as much as the figments he has derived from Milton! He now has himself cast in the role of Satan, and I in the role of God Almighty. And he demands that I create for him a mate, a gigantic Eve to give him solace."

"You must not do it!"

I saw him glance involuntarily upwards, as if in the direction of Heaven or, possibly, the floor above. The latter was more likely; he did not seem to have a great deal of time for God.

"But what a project!" he said. "To improve on one's first blundering attempts. . ."

"You are mad! Do you want two fiends after you, instead of one? At present, your monster has reason to spare your life. But when you have equipped him with a wife—why, it will be in his

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interest to kill you!"

He rested his head on his hand with a weary gesture. "How can you comprehend the difficulties of my situation? Why am I talking to you like this? The creature has uttered the direst of threats—not against my life, which is of little account, but against Elizabeth's. 'I will be with you on your wedding night!' That was what he said. If he cannot have a wedding, he will not allow mine. If I will not bring his bride to life, then he will rob my bride of her life."

Something in my throat almost choked me. He had revealed more of his degraded sensibilities than he knew, in thus equating himself with his travesty of life and Elizabeth with some monster yet uncreated.

I stood up. "You already have one implacable enemy. In me you will have a second unless you agree that we go tomorrow into the city and lay the entire matter before the syndics. Do you plan to populate the world with monsters?"

"You're being too hasty, Bodenland!"

"Not a moment too hasty! Come, agree!—We go in the morning?"

He sat looking at me, his mouth turned down in a bitter line. Then, abruptly, his gaze lowered, and he began to fiddle with a knife.

"Let's eat without quarrelling," he said. "I'll decide after the meal. Look, I'll get us some wine. You'd like to drink some wine."

His face was shining, maybe from the heat of the lights. He looked more than ever as if stamped out of metal.

There were bottles of red wine on a cabinet, and elegant glasses beside them. Victor snatched up a bottle and two glasses, and took them behind his curtain into the kitchen. "I'll open this bottle," he called.

He was some while. When he returned, he carried two brimming glasses.

"Drink, eat! Though civilization crumbles, let those who are civilized remain so to the end! A toast to you, Bodenland!" He raised his glass.

I was overcome by a fit of coughing. Could it be—could it possibly be—that he had poisoned or drugged my wine? The idea seemed too melodramatically absurd, until I recalled that all melodrama has its basis in the lurid facts of earlier generations.

"It's so hot under your lights," I said. "Could we not open a window?"

"Nonsense, it's snowing outside. Drink up!"

"But that window over there—I thought I heard a noise at it a moment ago. . ."

That was more effective. He was up and over to it, peering behind the wooden panel that blocked its panes.

"Nothing there. We are far enough above the ground. . .But that fiend is capable of building a

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ladder. . ." This was muttered apprehensively to himself. He came back and sat down, raising his glass again and staring at me intently.

Now I raised my glass with more confidence, for I had switched it for his. We both drank, staring at each other. I could see the nervous tension in him. So compulsively did he watch me empty my glass that he drained his own in compulsive sympathy.

I let my mouth fall open and set my glass down heavily on the table, allowing my head to fall back against the chair and my eyes to close, in the imitation of unconsciousness.

"Precisely—" he said. "Precisely—"

He struggled to get up from his chair. His glass fell to the floor, and landed on a rug without breaking. Victor would have fallen too, had I not run round the table and caught him as he staggered. His body was completely limp. His heart still beat, and a dew of sweat lay on his forehead.

When I had stretched him out on the floor, I stood over him. Now what should I do?

My position was not the most comfortable one. Below me was Yet and, even if I bluffed my way past him, the monster lurked outside. In any case, now if ever was my chance to ruin Victor's plans. As Frankenstein's gaze had recently done, my gaze turned up to the ceiling, beyond which lay the laboratory—with all its gruesome secrets now accessible to me!

XVIII.

THE SPIRAL STAIR wound upwards, clinging to the rough stone wall of the tower. I hastened up its wormy treads. The door at the top was fortified with extra timbers, and there were newly installed bolts on the door.

I slid back the bolts and pushed the door open.

Beyond was a completely cylindrical room, its beamed ceiling some nine feet high. One arc-lamp burned in the middle of the room, sending its gleam spluttering over the accumulated apparatus of the laboratory. Frankenstein's lights generated a lot of heat. To keep the temperature low, a skylight in the ceiling had been opened a crack; a few flakes of snow drifted about the room before melting.

My interest—my fascinated, horrified interest—was centered on a great bench to one side of the room. A monstrous form lay on it, covered by sheeting. I could see by its outline that it was at least dimly human.

Of the machines clustering about the bench, I formed no clear idea, except that, by the head, a tank of a red liquid stood above it, dripping its contents down a tube which led under the

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sheet. And there were other tubes and other wires which crept under there, coupled to other tanks and other machines which quivered and laboured as if they also had some dim expectation of life. They did their work to the accompaniment of syphoning and sucking noises.

A terrible fear was on me. The place smelt of preserving fluid and decay, laced with other stenches. I knew I had to approach that silent figure. I had to wreck it and the equipment sustaining it, but my limbs would not propel me forwards.

I looked about the place. On the wall hung beautiful diagrams in the manner of Leonardo da Vinci of the musculature of limbs and the action of levers. There were elegant Calcar skeletons from Vesalius, and diagrams of the nervous system, as well as anatomical charts marked in many colours. On shelves to one side stood retorts containing limbs with the flesh still on them, floating in preserving fluid—human limbs, I supposed, but did not attempt to identify them. And there were preserved sexual organs, male and female, some of them unmistakably animal. And a series of foetuses, beginning to decay in their jars. And what I took for a womb, slowly flaking apart with age. And numerous models in coloured waxes, built to imitate the things in the jars. And other models, of bones and organs, made in wood and various metals.

One whole shelf was devoted to the human skull. Some had been sawn laterally, some vertically, to reveal the complex chambers inside. Some had been part-filled with coloured wax. Others were cosmeticised in a strange way, with banked eye-sockets, raised cheekbones, altered brows, modified noses. The effect was of a row of fantastic helmets.

My fear was leaving me, overtaken by curiosity. In particular, I studied for some while a figure chalked on a great blackboard which stood close to the bench bearing the sheeted body.

The chalk figure outlined a human being. There were perfunctory indications of a face; flowing hair, and the more carefully sketched genitals, showed that a female was depicted. Departures from normal human anatomy were marked in red. The diagram represented six extra ribs, thus greatly increasing the lung-cage. The respiratory system had been modified, so that air could be breathed in through the nose, as customary, but out through apertures behind the ears. A magnified detail drew attention to the skin; although I could not understand the symbols appended, it looked as if the idea was that the outer skin should have less sensibility, by the withdrawal of nerves and capillary blood-vessels from the outer layers of the epidermis—in fact, that a sort of hide should develop over the flesh which would render

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its owner fairly immune to extremes of temperature. Again, the uro-genital tract had been modified. The vagina served purely for purposes of procreation; a sort of vestigial mock-penis was provided on the thigh, from which urine could be expelled. I looked at this detail with some interest, thinking it would probably tell a psychologist a great deal about Victor Frankenstein's thought processes during this period of his engagement.

Perhaps the most unusual feature of the diagram was that it represented the figure as having a twin backbone. This allowed for great strengthening in a traditionally weak region. The pelvis was also fortified, so that greater musculature was allowed in the legs. I thought of that spectral figure I had seen climbing Mount Saléve so rapidly, and began to understand the magnitude of Frankenstein's accomplishments and ambitions!

Across one side of the laboratory, a noble four-panelled screen embossed with emblematic figures had been drawn. Skirting the bench with its sheeted figure, I went and looked behind it.

This was—what do I call it? A charnel house? A dissecting room? On a slab and piled into a stone sink were torsos of human beings, one or two of them opened and filleted like pigs' carcasses. And there were legs and knee-sockets and slabs of unidentifiable meat. A slender female torso—headless but with arms—was pinned to the wall; one shoulder had been flayed to reveal a network of muscles.

I looked away at once. It was a gruesome cache of spare parts!

Now I turned to the principal occupant of Frankenstein's laboratory, to that sheeted figure lying on its bench surrounded by snuffling machines. I told myself that this was merely a self-set problem in human engineering. Small wonder that the monster regarded this creator as God Almighty! Until now, I had regarded the legendary Frankenstein as a sort of piecemeal dabbler in cadavers, a small-time crank who haunted crypts and graves for mismatched eyes and hands. My error was the fault of movie makers and other horror merchants. My dear Mary had had a truer idea when she called Victor 'The Modern Prometheus'.

Even so, the error may have started with Mary. For she had in some fashion, through her perceptive and precognitive powers —which in many ways she shared with Shelley—received Frankenstein's story from the thin air, as far as I could determine. No doubt that story contained many scientific theories which she had had to omit from her tale, being unable to comprehend them. I would have been forced to do the same myself. Only now was it clear to me what an achievement was Victor Frankenstein's, and how strong in

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him must be the desire to continue his line of research, whatever its consequences. So I stepped forward boldly and pulled the sheets away from what they concealed.

There lay a great female figure, naked except for the pipes and wires that fed or drained her!

Clutching the sheet, letting a great hollow groan escape me, I staggered back across the room. That face! That face, though the hair had been shaven from its head, leaving the skull bald and patterned with livid scars!—that face was the face of Justine Moritz! Her eyes, muzzy with death, seemed to be regarding mine.

XIX.

FOR A SPACE, my heart was almost as still as hers.

Now I saw clearly, for the first time, the villainy and the sheer horror of Frankenstein's researches. The dead are impersonal, and so perhaps it is of no especial moment that they should be disturbed—or so I might once have argued on Victor's behalf. But to press into service, as though it were no more than a compendium of useful organs, the body of a servant, a friend—and a friend, at that, who died for a crime attributable to one's own negligence—well, this moral madness placed him beyond human consideration.

At that moment, the determination came to me to kill Victor Frankenstein as well as his creatures.

Yet, while one part of my mind was reaching this decision, while horror and moral indignation were mounting me, another part of my mind was working in an opposite direction.

Despite myself, my regard was still held by the stupendous figure prone before me. The body had been formed from more than one carcass. Skin tones varied, and scars like scarlet ropes ran about the anatomy, so that one was reminded of a butcher's diagram. I could not help seeing that the amendments sketched on the blackboard had been executed; the modified organs were in place. The legs were far from female. They had too much muscle, too much hair, and were tremendously thick at the thigh. The extra ribs had been added, giving an enormous rib-cage, topped by gigantic if flacid breasts, powerful enough to suckle a whole brood of infant monsters.

My reactions to all this was not one of horror. For Frankenstein's researches I felt horror, yes. But confronted with this unbreathing creature surmounted by that frozen but guiltless female face, I felt only pity. It was pity mainly for the weakness of human flesh, for the sad imperfection of us as a species, for our nakedness, our frail hold on life. To be, to remain

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human was always a struggle, and the struggle always ultimately rewarded by death. True, the religious believed that death was only physical; but I had never allowed my instinctive religious feelings to come to the surface. Until now.

Victor's plan for this creature's coming resurrection would be a blasphemy. What had been done, in this inspired cobbling together of corpses, was a blasphemy. And to say as much—to think as much—was to admit religion, to admit that life held more than the grave at the end of it, to admit that there was a spirit that transcended the poor imperfect flesh. Flesh without spirit was obscene. Why else should the notion of Frankenstein's monster have affronted the imagination of generations, if it was not their intuition of God that was affronted?

To report my inner thoughts at such a moment of crisis must be to vex anyone who listens to this tape. Yet I am impelled to go on.

For the conflict of emotions in me caused me to burst into tears. I fell on my knees and wept, and called aloud to God. I buried my face in my hands and cried with helplessness.

Perhaps one detail I have not mentioned led to this unexpected response in me. On the stool by the side of the female stood a jar with flowers in, crimson and yellow.

There was another turn to the screw of my misery. For at that moment I thought I saw that all my previous beliefs in progress were built on shifting sand. How often, in my past life, I had claimed that one of the great benefits the Nineteenth Century had conferred on the West had been science's liberation of thought and feeling from organised religion. Organised religion, indeed! What had we in its place? Organised science! Whereas organised religion was never well organised, and often ran contrary to commercial interests, it had been forced to pay lip service, if not more than that, to the idea that there was a place in the scheme of things for the least among us. But organised science had allied itself with Big Business and Government; it had no interest in the individual—its meat was statistics! It was death to the spirit.

As science had gradually eroded the freedom of time, so it had eroded the freedom of belief. Anything which could not be proven in a laboratory by scientific method—anything, that is to say, which was bigger than science—was ruled out of court. God had long been banished in favour of any number of grotty little sects, clinging to tattered bits of faith; they could be tolerated, since they formed no collective alternative to the consumer society on which organised science depended so heavily.

The Frankenstein mentality had triumphed by my day. Two cen-

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turies was all it needed. The head had triumphed over the heart.

Not that I had ever believed in the heart marching ahead alone. That had been as grevious a thing as seeing the head triumph; that had caused the centuries of religious persecutions and wars. But there had been a chance, early in the nineteenth century, in Shelley's day, where the head and the heart had stood a chance of marching forward together. Now it had disappeared, even as Mary's Diseased Creation myth had prophesied.

Inevitably, I am elaborating after the event in intellectual terms. What I experienced as I fell on my knees was a metaphor—I saw the technological society into which I had been born as a Frankenstein body from which the spirit was missing.

I wept for the mess of the world.

"Oh, God!" I cried.

There was a sound above me, and I looked upwards.

A great beautiful face stared down at me. For a moment—then the skylight in the beamed roof was flung up, and Frankenstein's Adam came leaping down to stand before me in his wrath!

Until this wretched point in my narrative, I believe I have given a fairly good account of myself. I had acted with some courage and endurance—and even intelligence, I hope—in a situation many men would have found hopeless. Yet here I was, snivelling on my hands and knees. And all I could do at this terrible invasion was to rise and stand mutely, with my hands by my sides, staring up at this tremendous being—whom I now saw clearly for the first time.

In his anger, he was beautiful. I use the word beautiful, knowing it to be inaccurate, yet not knowing how else to counteract the myth which was circulated for two centuries that Frankenstein's monster's face was a hideous conglomeration of secondhand features.

It was not so. Perhaps the lie drew its life from a human longing for those chills of horror which are depraved forms of religious awe. And I must admit that Mary Shelley began the rumour; but she had to make her impression on an untutored audience. I can only declare that the face before me had a terrible beauty.

Of course, terror predominated. It was very far from being a human face. It resembled much more one of the helmet faces painted on the skulls in the rack behind me. Evidently, Frankenstein had been unable to create a face that pleased him. But he had given patient thought to the matter, just as he had to the rest of the alien anatomy; and he had ventured on what I can only call an abstraction of the human face.

The eyes were there, glaring down at me from behind high defensive cheekbones, as if through the slits of a visor. The other fea-

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tures, the mouth, the ears, and especially the nose, had been blurred in some fashion by the surgeon's knife. The creature that now stared down at me looked like a machine, lathe-turned.

His skull almost knocked against the beams of the ceiling. He bent, seized my wrist, and dragged me towards him as if I were no more than a doll.

XX.

"YOU ARE FORBIDDEN to be in here by my Creator!"

Those were the first words the nameless monster spoke to me. They were delivered quietly, in a deep voice—'a voice from the grave' was the association the tone aroused. Quiet though the words were, they carried no reassurance. This powerful being need make no special effort to quell me.

Its great hand that held me was a mottled blue, crusted and filthy. From its throat, where a carelessly tied scarf failed to conceal deep scars, to its feet, encased in boots that I imagined I recognised, the monster was a monument to grime. It was encrusted in mud and blood and excrement, so that its greatcoat was plastered against its trousers. Snow fell to the floor from it and melted. It still steamed slightly, so damp was it. This indifference to its wretched state was a further cause for alarm.

Shaking me slightly—so that my teeth rattled—it said, "This is no place for you, whoever you may be."

"You saved my life when I was dying on the hillside." The words happened to be the first I could enunciate.

"My role is not to spare life but to protect my own. Who am I to be merciful? All men are my enemies, and every living hand is turned against me."

"You saved my life. You brought me a hare to eat when I was starving to death."

He—I must cease to refer to him as an *it*—he let go of me, and I managed to remain standing in his dreadful presence.

"You—are grateful—to—me?"

"You spared my life. I am grateful for that gift, as perhaps you may be."

He rumbled. "I have no life while everyone's hand is turned against me. As I am without sanctuary, so I am without gratitude. My Creator gave me life, and the profit of it is I know how to curse; he gave me feeling, and the profit of it is I know how to suffer! I am Fallen! Without his love, his aid, I am Fallen.

" 'Why is life given
To be thus wrested from us? Rather why
Obtruded on us thus? Who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offered, or soon beg to lay it

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down,
Glad to be so dismissed in peace. . .'

"Are not those the words in the great Miltonic book? But, under threat, my Creator has agreed to make me this Eve with whom you interfere, uncovering her nakedness. She will make my misery more tolerable, my slavery only half-slavery, my exile less a banishment. What are you doing in such a place? Why has He allowed you here? What mischief have you done him?"

"None, none!"—fearing he might go downstairs and find Frankenstein in a state he would possibly mistake for lifeless.

He seized my arm again.

"Nobody is allowed to do Him mischief but me! I am His protector as long as He works on this project! Now, tell me what you have done with Him? Are you the Serpent, to come here like this, filthy and venomous?"

For a moment he turned towards the creature that wore the face of Justine. He stretched out an arm and placed a gnarled hand tenderly on her scarred brow; then he turned back to me.

"We'll see what you have done! Nothing can be hidden from me!"

Dragging me, he strode to the door in two strides, and flung it open. I struggled, but he did not even notice. Without a pause, he moved down the stairs. His movements were rapid and inhuman. I had to run with him, dreading what would come next.

Victor Frankenstein still lay senseless on the carpet below. Someone was with him. His servant Yet was bending over him, and had Victor's head against his knee. He looked up angrily, then yelled with terror, and jumped to his feet. The monster, coming forward, knocked him out of the way with one sweep of an arm as he marched towards the prone figure of his creator. The force of the casual blow was such that Yet was flung back against a bookcase. Books showered about him.

As for me, I was dragged forward at that awful pace, like a toy dog on a lead. The monster bent clumsily over his master, calling to him in that hollow and ghastly voice, like a hound baying.

I saw Yet drag himself up, eyes charged with fear, and make for the door to the lower regions. When he got there, he pulled an enormous bell-mouthed gun—I imagine it was a blunderbuss—from his belt and levelled it at the monster.

Instinctively, I threw myself down. The monster turned. He threw up one arm and gave a great cry as the gun went off.

Noise and smoke filled the room.

Yet went blundering down the stairs.

"You killed my master! Now you have wounded me!" cried the monster. With a bound, it was up and giving chase, hurling itself down the stairs. Cries came from Yet as he fled.

The noise had its effect on

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Frankenstein. He groaned and stirred. I saw that he would be coming to in a minute. I dashed the rest of his drugged wine in his face to revive him, and ran up to the laboratory again.

There was going to be murder before the night was through, and I had to get clear.

I slammed the door shut behind me, but there was no bolt on the inner side. Not that I imagined that any bolt could keep out that terrible avenging creature!

The female still lay there, watery eyes staring at some remote distance from which she waited to be recalled. I crossed behind her, and seized a pair of steps, used to reach the higher shelves. I dragged the steps to the middle of the room, climbed them, swung myself up through the skylight by which the monster had entered.

Supernaturally strong though the monster was, I could not visualise its being able to scale the sheer outside wall of the tower. Therefore it had made itself a ladder. Had not Victor mentioned some such possibility?

It was freezingly cold and entirely dark on the roof, despite the snow everywhere.

Nervously, I moved forward, fumbling round the battlements until I came to a protruding wooden pole. Here was the ladder. Only the terror of being caught by the creature—I could all too clearly imagine myself being hurled from the roof—drove me to climb over into space and feel for the first rung of the ladder. But—there it was, and I began to go down as quickly as possible but with difficulty, for there was almost a metre between rungs.

At length I stood on the ground, up to my ankles in fresh-fallen snow.

First I pulled the great ladder away from the tower, sending it crashing back into the trees. Then I went round to the gate, to listen there, in an agony of apprehension.

Banging noises sounded from within. There was the clang of metal as a bar was withdrawn. A small door in the big gates was flung open. Yet emerged, staggering drunkenly and clutching his shoulder.

By now, my sight had adjusted to the dark. I was hidden behind a tree, but could see his dark barrel-shaped silhouette clearly enough. Behind him, something was fighting to get out of the door. It was the monster. Instinctively, I ducked back a tree or two. Yet stood in the clearing as if undecided. He ambled over to the nearest tree—happily, some metres from where I stood hidden, and turned towards the tower.

Then I realised that he was wounded, and could not run, and that he carried a sword in his hand.

The monster still struggled to climb through a door too small for

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his immense frame. He wrenched at the stout panelling, roaring with fury. With a splintering noise, it fell beneath his pressure. He broke through, and was across the clearing that separated him from Yet in a twinkling.

Yet had time for one blow. Maybe it was a sabre he held. I saw a broad blade flash dimly, heard it strike the sleeve of the monster's greatcoat. A ferocious growl came from the monster. He gave Yet no time to strike again.

First he flung the man headfirst into the snow. Then he sprang savagely on top of him, and grappled him by the throat—as once he must have grappled with little William. And Yet could put up no more resistance than William.

In a moment, the monster rose, lurching a little, and started to head back for the dark tower. Behind him, Yet lay lifeless in the snow.

XXI.

"YOU HAVE KILLED AGAIN!" cried Victor Frankenstein.

He stood in the shattered doorway, confronting his monster, a shadow among shadows. From where I stood, I could see only that sharp-cut face of his, blurred by dark and passion.

The monster stopped before him. "Master, why do you misrepresent my every action? I attacked your servant only because I believed he had killed you. Your possessions and your servants are sacred to me, as well you know! Be propitious while I speak—hast thou not made me here thy substitute?"

"Cease to quote your Miltonic scriptures at me! You dare say thus, Fiend, and yet you threaten the life of my fiancée?"

To this the monster had nothing to say, but stood silent. They remained as they were; in some fashion they were communing, and I could sense from my vantage point the necessity that linked them. Perhaps the monster could never be dominated, yet Frankenstein, being human, could not resist the attempt.

"You remonstrate with me, you thing of evil, when your hands are still wet with the blood of my brother William. I know you brought about his death, whatever the court said on that score."

Then the monster spoke in his desolate voice. "You must abide by the verdict of the court, for you perforce come within human jurisdiction. They have no such claim on me, being without humanity. I say only this—that perplexed and troubled at my bad success, as was the Tempter, I struck at you through William. He to me was a limb of you, even as I am."

"And that filthy deed you put on to another."

At this, the monster gave a laugh like a whipped bloodhound. "I ripped the locket from his sanguined throat and tucked it into

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the pocket of the maid where she slept. If she was hanged for that, so much for man's legal institutions!"

"For that piece of devilry you will be well repaid, never fear!"

The creature growled in its throat. Again they ran out of words. Victor remained in the shattered door. The nameless one waited outside, its outline blurred by the slow ascent of steam from its clothes. Lizards could not have been more still until the creature spoke again, this time with a note of pleading in its voice.

"Let me enter into the tower, my Creator, and let me see you bring life to the mate I know you have prepared, manlike but different sex, so lovely fair. And then—since you cannot find it in your heart to love me—we will go our separate ways, for ever and ever, never to meet more. You shall go where you will. I will dwell in the frigid lands with my bride, and no man shall ever set eyes on us again!"

Again silence.

Finally, Frankenstein said, "Very well, so shall it be, since it cannot be otherwise. I will give life to the female. Then you must go and never afflict my eyesight again."

The great creature fell on its knees in the snow. I saw it reach out its hand towards Frankenstein's boots.

"Master, I will feel only gratitude, that I swear! The thoughts that torment me I will forget. I am your slave. How I wish that but once before you banish me we might converse together on fragrant subjects! What a world you might open up to me. . .yet all we ever speak of together is guilt and death, I know not why. The grave is never far from my meditations, Master, and when the boy died in my clutch—oh, you cannot understand, it was as Adam said, a sight of terror, foul and ugly to behold, horrid to think, how horrible to feel! Speak to me once in loving tones of better things."

"Do not fawn! Get up! Stand away! You must come with me into the tower to accomplish this foul work, since Yet is slain—I need your aid stoking the boilers to keep the electricity at full voltage. Enter and be silent."

Moaning, the creature rose, saying impulsively, "When I found you just now, I feared you were killed also, Master."

"Confound you, I was not killed but drugged. Maybe it would have been better for me otherwise! That interfering Bodenland was to blame. If you encounter him, Fiend, on him you may exercise your fiendishness without restraint!"

They were now moving inside. I followed to the door and heard the creature's rebuke by way of reply.

"The breaking of necks is no pleasure for me. I have my religious beliefs, unlike you inventors rare, unmindful of your Maker,

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though His spirit taught you! Besides, Bodenland expressed some gratitude to me—the only man ever to do so!"

"What religious system could ever light a light within your skull!" said Frankenstein contemptuously, leading the way upstairs, where a shaft of light indicated an open door into the machine room. They climbed through, and the door closed behind them.

For a while I stood by the shattered doorway, wondering what to do. Plenty of timber lay about the building. Maybe I could stack it up and set the place alight, so that they—and that terrible female they were now conspiring to bring to life—would perish in the flames, together with all Frankenstein's instruments and notes. But how could I get a fire going fast enough to catch them? For they would escape before the fire caught.

The steam engine began to work faster overhead. Protected by the noise, which surely signified the most hideously active stoking the word had ever seen, I began to search about, even daring to light a flambeau, which was all this ground floor seemed to warrant in the way of illumination.

Plenty of wood and timber lay about, as well as skins of wine and various provisions. To one side stood the phaeton. Beyond that was the stable, with the horse standing there indifferently, uncaring what passed before its eyes as long as it had food. Pushing its head out of the way, I thrust the flambeau into its stall, to see if there might be kerosene or paraffin stored there, or at least a good stack of hay.

An even more welcome sight met my eyes.

There stood my automobile, the Felder, unharmed, almost unscratched!

Amazed, I went into the stable, closing the lower door behind me. The stable was located in the square building adjoining the base of the tower. I saw there was a large door here leading straight outside. My vehicle had been pushed through it.

One of the car doors hung open. I extinguished my torch and climbed in, switching on one of the overhead lights. Everything was in disorder, but I could not see that anything had been taken.

I found a sheet of paper, a certificate which formally handed the vehicle over to the Frankenstein family. It was signed by the Genevoise Chief of Police. So Elizabeth had been careful to acquire the car as some compensation for her fiancé's supposed murder! But what had Victor made of it? He must have towed it here for further investigation. Had he understood it for what it was? Would that explain why he asked me so few questions, took my unlikely presence and knowledge so much for granted? How precious would this car be to

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him? What new developments in science would he be able to deduce from the features of my automobile and its contents?

Checking the firearms, I found the swivel-gun was intact; a Browning .380 automatic was also present, together with its box of shells. I flung the sporting pistol I had looted on to the back seat, relieved to think I would never have to defend myself with it.

It occurred to me that, only a generation before mine, automobiles had been fuelled by gasoline. Gasoline would have been ideal for a sudden blaze; the sealed nuclear drive was useless in that respect.

Having the car gave me other ideas. A fire would always be an easy thing from which a superhuman creature like the monster could escape. A hail of bullets was quite another matter.

Working as quietly as I could, pausing every now and again to listen, I opened the outer gate wide. This entailed shovelling away a considerable drift of snow. Then I attempted to push the vehicle into the open.

I got my shoulder to it and heaved. It would not budge.

After some exertion, I decided the track was too rutted for me to have a hope. Since I would have to start the engine some time in any case, it might be best to do so now, cloaked by the noise of the steam engine thudding somewhere overhead.

Praise be for the twenty-first century! The Felder started immediately, and I watched the revs climbing on the rev-counter until I began to roll forward into the open. What a feeling of power to be back at the wheel again!

Once I was outside, I left the engine running and ran back to close the gate. Then I manoeuvred the auto among the trees, until I set it—according to my estimation—in the perfect position, some way from the main gates of the tower, but having them in view even in the present dismal light. Then I raised the blister, and focused the swivel-gun.

All I had to do was squeeze the button when someone emerged from the tower. It was the best solution. The extraordinary stop-start conversion between Victor and his monster had convinced me of the latter's supreme dangerousness: given its malevolence, its lying and eloquent tongue was probably as big a threat as its turn of speed.

Time passed. The hour slid slowly down the great entropy slope of the universe.

The snow ceased. A slender moon appeared.

My labouring minutes were occupied with fantasies of the most horrific kind. While the monster stoked, was Victor finding time to perform a facial operation on the female? Or was he. . . Enough of that. I would have given a good deal to have the stalwart Lord Byron with me, armed with the

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handgun.

Although visibility improved with moonlight, I was not happy at the improvement. The car might now be noticed from the entrance to the tower, whereas I had set it in shadow. Although it might seem that the advantage was heavily enough with me, ensconced behind a swivel-gun, still there was that memory of improved musculature, of fantastic jumps and fast runs, of irrascibility coupled with power. Just suppose that creature eluded my first stream of bullets and got to me before I could kill it. . .

Chilly though I was, the supposition chilled me more. I jumped out of the car and began to collect up fallen pine branches with which to camouflage the vehicle.

While I was some metres away from it, the ruined door of the tower was flung wide and the monster emerged!

A fleeting recollection, as the dying are supposed to relive past episodes: recollection of my old sane ordered life now lost by two centuries, of my dear wife, my valued friends, even some of my esteemed enemies, and of my little grandchildren. I recalled how sane and healthy they were. And I contrasted them with the fiends with whom I had to deal in 1816!

Dropping the branches, I started what I feared would be a hopeless run back to the felder. Foolishly, I had not even brought the automatic with me.

I reached the automobile. I scrambled in.

Only then did I turn to see what was happening, and how near my pursuer was.

XXII.

GREAT FLAT-TOPPED sheets of cloud were moving out of the frigid lands, intermittently obscuring the moon. The scene by the tower was rendered in untrustworthy washes of light.

Frankenstein's monster stood outside the shattered door. He was not looking at me at all. He stared back in to the dark from which he had emerged. I thought that one of his hands was extended. He took a pace back to the door.

There was a hesitancy in his manner which was entirely strange. Someone took his hand. A figure emerged from the doorway, a figure almost as gigantic as he. It staggered, and he caught its elbow. They stood together, heads almost touching.

He made her walk to and fro. I saw their breath on the frosty air. He was supporting her, an arm about her enormous waist. Her lumbering footsteps kicked up small flurries of snow.

She was weak from post-operative shock, and had to lean against the wall. Her face was turned upwards towards the night sky. Her mouth opened.

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He left her, moving with that terrible needless alacrity back into the tower. From my hiding place, I strained to see her more clearly. Moonlight washed over her features, making of her eyes a perfect blank. It no longer looked like Justine. Another life occupied it.

The monster returned, bearing a goblet. He forced her to drink despite her protests. She drank, and he flung the glass down, standing back from her to see what she did.

She came uncertainly forward, step by step, feeling for her balance. She stood, arms extended but bent, and slowly moved her head from side to side. She turned with an automatic movement and began to walk, swaying from side to side at first, but gradually gaining a more regular rhythm.

He dashed about her solicitously with his characteristically irascible haste.

At one stage, he joined her, pacing with her, beating time with one hand. Then he stood aside again, still conducting, urging her to move faster. She went to lean against the wall—he made a vehement negative gesture—she staggered forward again.

He began to run about in front of her, to turn, to perform grotesque dance movements that were not without some grace. She came to him hesitantly, and he took both her hands in his. Hesitantly, they began to trip from side to side, facing each other, he always encouraging her, like two lunatic children in a dance.

She had to rest. He supported her, staring up at the tower. She was holding her side and explaining something.

With a human gesture, he cupped his mouth with one hand and called upwards into the night.

"Frankenstein!"

As that great hollow voice sounded, dogs began barking in a nearby village, and were answered more distantly by wolves up in the hills.

No reply came from the tower.

After a rest, the pair began to dance again. Then he released her and ran about, as slowly as he could. She followed ponderously. Once, she fell over, sprawling in the snow. He was upon her instantly, lifting her up with tender clumsy care, holding her scarred head against his cheek.

He urged her to run again. He cantered behind the tower. She followed. She was cautious at first, but her movements were coordinating rapidly. She found she could wave her arms as she ran. He stood back to watch in admiration, hands on tattered knees.

A strange mooing noise broke from them, which roused the dogs again. She was laughing!

Now she gestured to him to follow her. She set off round the tower, with him in playful pursuit. They were as sportive as a pair of shire horses. When she

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re-appeared, her bald head gleaming dully, her arms were extended and she was making the mooing noise again. To keep her moving, he pretended to be unable to catch her.

As he ran, his hair streamed behind that helmet-skull like a plume.

Her actions were less clumsy now, her movements faster. She stopped suddenly. He clasped her about the waist, she pushed him away with a feature that would have felled a man. There she stood, moving her arms, her wrists, her hands, like a Balinese dancer at practice. She was grotesquely dressed in what I took to be nothing more than the two sheets that had covered her on the bench, clumsily knotted about her vast frame; perhaps because of that, there was something poignant in those androgynous movements parodying grace.

Night brightened sharply, as if the moon had just disentangled itself from cloud. I looked up, startled to find how I had forgotten everything but the antics of these two monstrous beings.

Two moons sailed in the sky.

One moon was the crescent that until now had claimed sole tenancy of the night. The other, an extended hand's span away from it, was almost full. They peered down on the world like two eyes, one half-closed.

The disintegration of space-time was still taking place!—but this thought came to me not in any orderly way but as a confused recollection of a passage in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar"—

"And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead;

"Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds. . .

"The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes."

Death was very much on my mind, yet I could not tear my attention away from the cavortings of those two inhuman beings. Almost as if they had been awaiting the signal of an extra moon, they now took their prancings into a much more intense phase. They stayed much more closely together, weaving intricate patterns round each other.

Sometimes she stood still, providing a centre for the storm of his movement; sometimes the roles were reversed, and he stood tensely while she whirled about him. Then their mood would change, and they would langourously intertwine and writhe as if to the stately music of a sarabande. They were now deeply into their mating dance, oblivious to all that went on beyond the charmed circle of their courtship. Two moons in one sky were nothing to them!

Again a change of mood. The tempo grew wilder. They danced away from each other, they darted towards each other. Occasionally, one would flick snow at the other—although by now the snow was well trampled over a wide area. As their motions became fas-

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ter, so they moved in wider and wider gyrations. They were nearing the auto now, plunging towards it, backing away, seeing nothing but each other. I was too hypnotised to move. My plan to use the swivel-gun was gone from my head.

When she came very near, I had a clear view of her face, turned brightly to the moonlight. There I read conflicting things. It was the intent face of female in rut—yet it was also the face of Justine, impersonal with death. If anything, *his* face was even more horrific, lacking as it did all but a travesty of humanity; for all his animation, it still most resembled a helmet, a metal helmet with visor down, roughly shaped to conform to the outlines of a human face. The helmet had a tight slit across it, representing a smile.

They joined hands, they twirled round and round and round. She broke away, uttering that mooing noise. She began to circle the tower again. Again he followed.

The wolves were howling closer at hand. Their discord provided accompaniment for the chase that now developed between the two beings. She darted round and round the tower, running fast but waving her hands. He kept close behind, not exerting himself. As the pace hotted up, panic entered her movements. She began to run in earnest, he to follow in earnest. I cannot say at what speed they moved, or how many times she circled the base of the tower, running as if her life depended on it. He was calling, making inarticulate noises, grunting and angry.

Finally, when his hand was on her shoulder, she half-turned, slapped his arm away, and made as if to burst inside the tower for sanctuary. He seized her in the doorway.

She screamed, a hoarse tenor noise, and fought. With one great heave of his hand, he ripped her flimsy garments from her.

I saw that her reluctance to be taken had been feigned, or part-feigned. For she stood before him naked and brazen, and began again a slow weaving movement of her limbs, without departing from where she stood. I could see the great livid weals of scars running across the small of her back and down her mighty thighs.

He remained in a half-crouch watching her, the smile of the helmet very narrow now. Then he sprang, bearing her down into the trampled snow only a few paces from Yet's body.

That narrow smile was pressed to the scars on Justine's throat. She half-rose at one point, but he bore her down again. She gave her tenor scream, and the wolves answered. A light uneasy wind licked through the bushes.

It was a brief and brutal mating.

Then they lay on the ground like two dead trees.

She rose first, searching out her

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sheets and knotting them indifferently about her torso. He got up. Gesturing that she was to follow him, he began to march along the path that led down the hill, and was quickly out of sight. She followed. In a moment, she too had disappeared.

I was alone, dry of mouth, sick at heart.

XXIII.

FOR A WHILE, I paced up and down in the clearing, consumed by a mixture of emotions. Among them, I have to confess, was lust, reluctantly aroused by that unparalleled mating. A natural if unfortunate association of ideas made me think of Mary and wonder where she was, in this increasingly confused universe. Sanctity and obscenity lie close in the mind.

Along with my self-disgust went anger. For I had meant to slay the monster. There would have been no glory in it; it would just have been a brutal ambush, keeping myself as far out of danger as possible; but I had conceived it my duty to kill the creature—and his maker, too, for the same reason, that both represented a threat to mankind, perhaps even to the natural order. Had compunction stayed my hand, or mere curiosity?

I felt little pride in myself, and knew I would feel still less when I had finished with Victor Frankenstein. He was still on the scene.

Or could it be that his monsters had killed him after he had brought life to the female? No doubt that might have been their intention; certainly Victor had suspected as much. By remaining on his guard, he could have eluded them.

I had not seen him leave the tower; maybe he had slipped out from the back way. It was more likely that he would still be hiding in the tower, in which case I had to seek him out, which meant venturing back into those hateful rooms where machinery had pounded.

My argument with myself had brought me to a standstill in the snow.

The body of Yet sprawled not far away. Wolves lurked in the forest. I saw green eyes among the trees. But I had the automatic in my pocket, and was not afraid of them in the midst of so much that was more alarming.

Cupping my hand, I shouted at the tower, "Frankenstein!"

Complete silence. I should have said that the throb of machines had died some hours ago, during the early stages of the mating dance. I was about to call again, when there was a movement in the dark beyond the shattered door, and Victor emerged into the clearing.

"So you are still about, eh, Bodenland? Why don't you fall

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silent on your knees before me? I gather you witnessed what I have achieved! I have done something that no other man has done! The power over life and death now belongs to mankind: at last the wearying cycle of the generations has been broken and an entirely new epoch is inaugurated. . ."

He stood with his arms above his head, unconsciously apeing the stance of an old prophet.

"Come to your senses, man! You know you have merely succeeded in creating a pair of freaks and fiends that will multiply and add to man's already great miseries. What makes you think they have not left here in all haste for Geneva and your house, where Elizabeth lives?" It was a cruel idea to stab him with, and he immediately showed its effect.

"My creature swore to me —swore by the names of God and Milton!—that as soon as his mate was created he would flee with her to the frigid lands, never to return to the haunts of men. He swore that!"

"What is his oath worth? Haven't you created a patched thing without an immortal soul? How can it have a conscience?"

I drew my automatic, wondering if I could work myself up to kill him. He seized my other arm, pleadingly. "No, don't shoot, don't be foolish! How can you slay *me*, who alone understands these fiends, when you spared the fiends themselves? Listen, I had no alternative but to galvanise the tissues of that female into life —you saw how he threatened me. But there is a sure way how we can rid the world of them both. Let me create a *third* creature—"

"You're crazy!" Dawn was filtering in now. I could see the frenzy of enthusiasm in his face. A wind stirred.

"Yes, a third! Another male! Already I have many of the parts. Another male would seek out my first creation in the frigid lands: Jealousy would do the rest. . . They would fight over the female and kill each other. . . Put away your pistol, Bodenland, I beg—I beg of you! Look, come inside, come upstairs, let me explain, let me show you my future plans —you are civilized. . ."

He moved into the tower. My will paralysed, I followed, still holding the automatic before me. There was a roaring in my ears, a desperate sickness overcoming me; my indecision thundered through me like waves.

I was following him up the stairs again, listening to his voice, which babbled on, wavering between sense and nonsense, as he too was seized by fear and fever. The figure of death—all its factors of cruelty, sadness, and hate—was compounded between us. Sickly colours were in the air, whirring about us like moiré patterns.

". . .no purpose in life on this globe—only the endless begetting and dying, too monstrous to be called Purpose—just a phantasmagoria of flesh and flesh remade,

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of vegetation intervening —humans are just turnips, ploughed back at the end of the winter—the soil, the air, that linkage—like Shelley's west wind—the leaves could be us —you know, you understand me, Bodenland, 'like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing, yellow and black and pale and hectic red, pestilence-stricken multitudes. . .' Did you ever think it might be life that was the pestilence, the accident of consciousness between the eternal chemistry working in the veins of earth and air? So you can't—you mustn't kill me, for a purpose must be found, invented if necessary, a human purpose, *human*, putting *us* in control, fighting the *itness* of the great wheeling world, Bodenland. You see, Bodenland? You're—you're an intellectual like me, I know it—I can tell—personalities must not enter into it, *please*—we have to be above the old considerations, be ruthless, as ruthless as the natural processes governing us. It stands to reason. Look—"

We had mounted somehow to his living room, I still pointing the automatic towards him, transfixed by crisis like creatures in a Fuseli canvas. He stumbled towards a desk as he was talking, opened a drawer, bent, began to pull something from it—

I fired from close range.

He looked up at me. His face was transformed in some terrible way I could not explain—it no longer looked like his face. He brought a child's skull out into the light, placed it shakingly on the desktop.

In a sepulchral and choked voice, he said, "Henry will make a suitable husband for—"

A ragged cough broke through his speech. Blood spurted from his mouth. He put a hand to his chest. I made a move forward.

"A husband for—"

Again the blood.

"Victor—" I said.

His eyes closed. He was a small, frail man, young. He collapsed delicately, sinking rather than falling to the floor. His head went against the carpet with a gesture of weariness. Another choking cough, and his legs kicked.

Perched on an ancient folio, the baby's skull stared at me.

XXIV.

WHEN I LET THE HORSE go free and set fire to the tower of Frankenstein, it was as much to burn out my crime as to have an end to Frankenstein's notes and researches. Yet one of his notebooks I did keep; it was a diary of his progress, and I preserved it in case I ever managed to return to my own time.

Well, we will say it like that. But my original personality had now almost entirely dissolved, and the limbo I was in seemed to me the only time I knew. I did

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what I did.

Leaving a great column of smoke behind me, I climbed into my automobile and drove to see if the Villa Diodati and the Campagne Chapuis were still in existence on this plane.

They were not. The frigid lands began no more than a stone's throw from where Mary's door had stood. It will seem odd to say I was relieved; but there was relief in the discovery, for I felt myself too soiled to approach her again. There had been periods in my earlier life when the apocalytic nature of some event—say a severe personal humiliation—had caused me to return ever and again to it, obsessively, in memory; not just to recall it, but to *be* there again, in an eternal return such as Ouspenski postulates, as if some pungently strong emotion could cause time to close back on itself like a fan. But those occasions were nothing to the obsessive return in the toils of which I was now involved. I could not rid myself of Victor's death, or of the mating dance. The two happened simultaneously, were one linked event, one in violence, one in the annihilation of personality, one in their intolerable disintegrative charge.

Between the blinding voltages of these returns, I attempted to make my brain think. At least the graven image of reality had been destroyed for me, so that I no longer had difficulty in apprehending Frankenstein and his monsters, Byron, Mary Shelley, and the world of 2020 as contiguous. What I had done—so it seemed—was wreck the *fatalism* of coming events. If Mary Shelley's novel could be regarded as a possible future, then I had now rendered it impossible by killing Victor.

But Victor was not real. Or rather, in the twenty-first century from which I came (there might be others from which I had not come), he existed only as a fictitious, or, at best, legendary character; whereas Mary Shelley was an historical figure whose remains and portraits could be dwelt on.

In that world, Victor had not reached the point of emerging from possibility to probability. But I had come to an 1816 (and there might be countless other 1816s of which I knew nothing) in which he shared—and his monster shared—an equal reality with Mary and Byron and the rest.

Such thought opened dizzy vistas of complexity. Possibility and time levels seemed as fluid as the clouds which meet and merge eternally in northern skies, forever changing shape and altitude. Yet even the clouds are subject to immutable laws. In the flux of time, there would always be immutable laws. Would character be a constant? I had regarded character as something so evanescent, so malleable; not that I saw a fatalism there; in Mary's melancholy, in Victor's anxious scientific drive, in my own curiosity. These were

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permanent factors, though they might be reinforced by accidental events, the drowning of Shelley, let us say, or a basic lack of sympathy in Elizabeth.

Somewhere, there might be a 2020 in which I existed merely as a character in a novel about Frankenstein and Mary.

I had altered no future, no past. I had merely diffused myself over a number of cloud-patch times.

There was no future, no past. Only the cloud-sky of infinite present states.

Man was prevented from realising this truth by the limitations of his consciousness. Consciousness had never evolved as an instrument designed to discover truth; it was a tool to hunt down a mate, the next meal.

If I came anywhere near the truth now, it was only because my consciousness was slipping towards the extreme brink of disintegration.

All this reasoning—if it was that—might in itself be illusion, product of stress, or product merely of the timeslips. Space-time went on in my skull, just as in the rest of the universe!

I fell into a swooning sleep, drooped over the steering column.

When I woke, Victor was still with me, dying all over again, my hand reaching out as if to save him, as if in ridiculous apology.

Murder! I dared not think of God.

Well, I will try to say no more of this.

Frankenstein had gone. One thing remained for me. I had now to take on his role of monster-killer. Imperfectly though I recalled Mary's novel, I knew that her Frankenstein had embarked on a pursuit of his creature which had taken them both into those gloomy and ice-bound regions which held so strong a lure for the Romantic imagination.

For two days, I drove along the fringes of the frigid lands which followed roughly the shores of the old lake, trying to pick up a trace of the two monsters. Wild and awful though I was, no human being questioned my appearance now. Their lives had been utterly disrupted. Their crops were ruined, their livelihood on the lake had vanished, and the winter promised starvation for all of them.

Extreme though the times were, the two monsters would have remained sufficiently remarkable, prodigies in a time of prodigies.

Towards sunset on the second day, I happened on a hamlet where a small child had been attacked by wolves in her father's back-garden only the evening before.

There was a hostelry called the Silver Stag at which I made my enquiries. The owner said that his stable had been broken into the previous night, after he had gone to bed. He heard his dogs howl-

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ing in the yard, had lit a lantern and gone down to see what was happening. An enormous man—a foreigner, he suspected—had come rushing from the stable, dragging the two best horses with him. After him came another great foreigner, pulling the donkey. He had tried to intervene and had been swept out of the way. He called to his neighbours for help. By the time they arrived, the two enormous thieves had gone, riding down the road with the innkeeper's best dog, a German shepherd, still snapping at their heels. He took me and showed me how brutally the lock on the stable had been broken, and the adjacent timber shattered. I had seen such damage, such superfluous strength, before.

Close to starvation though the hamlet was, the lure of profit was still working. I paid dearly for some dried wurst and drove away in the direction the innkeeper indicated.

Once into the frigid lands, I paused to sleep and bring this account up to date. On the morrow, I would begin the pursuit.

XXV.

EVEN BEFORE the time-broken landscape met my gaze next morning, Victor Frankenstein was there before my eyes as usual, falling as usual behind the old desk, unable as usual to speak Elizabeth's name for blood.

I climbed out of the car, performed my natural functions, rinsed my face in an icy stream. Nothing could refresh my soul; I was a Jonas Chuzzlewit, a Raskolnikov. I had lied, cheated, committed adultery, looted, thieved, and ultimately murdered; henceforth my only fit company was the two brutes who journeyed somewhere ahead of me, my only fit surroundings the frigid hinterlands of hell which I now entered. I had taken over Victor's role. Henceforth, there was only the hunt to the death.

Of the first part of that journey, I shall tell briefly.

The country over which I travelled reminded me of the tundra I had seen in parts of Alaska and the Canadian North-West. It was all but featureless, apart from an occasional lonely pine or birch tree. The surface consisted of uneven tussocks of rough grass and little else. The ground was generally marshy, with frequent pools lying amid the grass, from which I guessed that permafrost had formed underground, preventing the water from draining away.

Nor was the sun of sufficient power to draw up the surface moisture. I was in a land where sunshine had little effect.

It would be hard to say that there were tracks in this wilderness. Yet there were indications that men or animals travelled here, and an occasional wooden

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post had been raised presumably as a marker. Now and again, a trail emerged.

Although my progress was slow, I knew that the quarry I sought could scarcely move at a faster rate. The going was quite as bad for horses as for automobiles.

Day followed day. Nothing can be said of them.

Then came the day when the nature of the land altered slightly. As I moved slowly forward, I saw the change ahead. It was marked by the land becoming rougher, the clumps of grass coarser and more upstanding, and the dark dull pools more frequent. More bushes stood out.

It was not impossible that another timeslip had been at work here, amalgamating two similar territories which had formerly lain many thousands of miles and maybe many thousands of centuries apart.

A slight incline marked the division between the territories. Here I found a distinct trail, branching two ways. I drove to the top of the incline, stopped, and climbed out to look about me, uncertain whether to take the left track or the right, although imbued with such fatalism that I almost believed I should strike the correct one whatever I did. But something had not been content to leave matters so to chance.

On the left hand track lay the body of an animal. I went across to it and saw it was the carcass of a fine German sheepdog. Its skull had been shattered by a blow. Its muzzle pointed along the trail.

Day followed day as I continued the journey. They were without distinction of differentiation. Not only was the weather icily still; the days themselves were without sunset, for the sun no longer sank below the land. Along the northern horizon, night travelled, its stain remaining there even at noon; but so high was the latitude—or so I had to presume—that the solar orb was never extinguished. Nor did it ever manage to rise far towards zenith. Instead, it undulated round the dismal horizon, never more than a few degrees above its rim. I was in a land where the dews and mists of protracted dawn merged indistinguishably with the damps and veiled splendours of a long-drawn-out sunset.

A mournful beauty infiltrated this period, in which the only permanent and persistent qualities were the most amorphous. Banks of mist, towers of cloud, layers of silvery fog, nondescript pools which reflected the curtained sky—these were the durable features of that place. Amid such a phantasmal landscape, small wonder if I saw phantoms: Victor forever clutching at his coat and falling behind the desk with a last dull glance towards me, the monster steaming as it lept forward. But of living things there was none.

I am almost reluctant to say that change came. Yet it is ulti-

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mately the one permanent thing until the death of the universe.

That ineluctable change wrote itself on the envelope of colour and moisture around me so gradually, so tentatively, that it was many hours before I came to accept that there were objects ahead of me, materialising in the veils of mist.

At first they seemed to be merely the tops of tall conifers.

Then I believed that they were masts of ancient sailing ships, lying becalmed on an ocean somewhere within reach.

Then I saw that they were spires of old churches, old cathedrals, old towns, ancient cities.

It was of more immediate concern that I now came on a definite track. Although it was less than a sandy lane, frequently punctuated by pools of water, it gave the landscape purpose, and nothing interested me but purpose; I had become machine-like.

The track—soon it was marked enough to warrant being called a road—ran straight towards the shrouded horizon without touching on any of the old towns. Never did I see the base of one of those towns or cathedrals. Always, their spires floated on the beds of mist which blanketted the land. I recalled the paintings of a German Romantic artist, Caspar David Friedrich, with his embodiments of all that was gloomy and meagre about nature in the north. I could imagine myself in the still world of his art.

The towns I passed distantly held no attraction for me, their crumbling roofs, their gothic spires, no promise. Other matters possessed me.

Nevertheless, fatigue still played a role in my world. It came to me that my hands were numb from clutching the steering wheel, that my body had stiffened almost immoveably, and that I no longer recollected who I was or had been. I was simply a travelling item, wheeled and inexhaustibly propelled. I had not slept for many days—certainly a week, possibly longer.

I turned down a side-track, striking at random for one of the towns.

Through the mists was the apparition of an ecclesiastical ruin, its gaunt buttresses palely washed in.

I pursued it, and came at last to the mouldering remains of a large abbey. Many stones and arches stood yet, while the entire west wall—its fine triple window a gaping hole—was almost intact, although crowned in ivy and similar parasitic vegetation.

On leaving the car, I saw an old fallen signpost, its arms pointing to places called Creifswald and Peenemünde. Then I realised it was one of a vast pile of decaying signs, all indicating various towns, and left here to rot indifferently. Perhaps the very destinations were no more.

In the shell of the once-noble

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building, a much humbler dwelling stood, looking for protection and support from the great wall which towered above it. I went towards it through thistle-patches with something like an echo of hope stirring in me, thinking I saw a light burn dimly in one window; it was only the eternal illusory sunset, reflected back by glass. I found that the dwelling was deserted, itself a ruin, its walls crumbling, its thatch tumbling down about its upper windows. It seemed I was not intended any longer for human company.

The house was tumbledown, and had been occupied by transients before. I did not care. Stiff and weary as I was, I lowered myself down on a couch to sleep unmindful of how many mortals had done the same before me.

XXVI.

DURING THAT NIGHT without darkness, a wind sprang up, causing windows, shutters, and doors to creak. The noises may have accounted for the nature of the visions which besieged me, crowding into a brain long deprived of its dreaming times.

Dear Mary was with me again. We were never able even to touch, but at least she was with me. Sometimes she was young and beautiful, and walked in the States with me, leading a sheltered life and meeting few people. Or she was a best-selling novelist, going everywhere, speaking to large gatherings, visiting the premieres of the films made from her novels. Sometimes she was with Shelley.

Sometimes she and I were utterly taken up with a search for Shelley. He was missing, and we moved through the countryside seeking for him. Her little face, looking upwards at mine, was pathetic—and not a face at all, I realised, but merely a limp hand, lying in snow. We were hastening along a boulder-strewn shore, searching for Shelley's boat. We were in the boat, staring down into limpid water. We were in the water, venturing into submarine caves. We were in a cavern, watching leaves blow before us. "Those are the leaves of the Sybil," said Mary. Once she was with her mother, a radiantly beautiful woman who smiled mysteriously as she climbed into a railway carriage.

I was with Shelley and Mary in the subordinate role of gardener. They were old now, although I had not aged. Mary was small and frail; she wore a bonnet. Shelley was bent but still amazingly quick in his movements. He had a long beard. He was a cabinet minister. He was my father. He was inventing a plant that would produce sirloin steak. He spoke with the sound of mandolins. He picked Mary up and tucked her into his pocket. He announced publicly

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that he was going to take over Greece in a week's time. He sat on a mossy stone and wept, refusing to be comforted. I offered him a bowl of something, but a raven ate it, whatever it was. He flew a kite and climbed swiftly up its string.

Byron was there. He had grown fat and wore a cocked hat. "Nothing is against nature," he told me, laughing, by way of explanation.

In my dream, I was glad to see Byron. I was asking him to be reasonable about some matter. He was busy being sensible about something else entirely.

He opened a green door, and in came Mary and Shelley, eating oranges in rather a disgusting way. Shelley showed me a photograph of himself in which he looked skinny. Mary was old again. She introduced me to a young poet friend whose name was Thomas Hardy. He was doing something with some bricks, and told me he had admired the works of Darwin ever since he was a child. I asked him if he did not mean to name another poet. He smiled and said that Mary would understand better because she had been officially presented with—I forget what, something absurd, the Pomeranian flag. . .

So far, the dreams were flashes of trivial nonsense. I need not recall more. Then they took on a more sombre tone. An old friend escorted me to an enormous pile of rubbish. A woman was sitting in the sunset, cradling a baby. She was enormous. Her clothes appeared to be smoking. She wore a black hat.

The child kept up a squealing cry which its mother seemed not to notice. My friend was explaining that the cry was a certain voice-print of brain damage in the infant. He gave an exact name to the kind of damage, which I failed to hear. I was actively searching through the rubbish.

I found there were many infants in the great heap, all with wakeful eyes. Many had huge malignant pouchy foreheads coming almost to their noses. Maybe they were foetuses; in any case, I appeared to anticipate finding them there.

They were crying. So was Mina. She had changed. Something had wounded her. I thought her hair was on fire. A pig ran past, although we were in a crowded room. A man she knew was pulling a piano apart.

The noise of crying mingled with the sound of wind.

When I roused at last, it was some relief to find myself in that dismal house in the ruins and to some extent at least the master of my waking fate; although, as the nonsense in my brain sank back into its container, out stalked the image of Victor again, his face like a medallion, staggering, falling.

Or sometimes not falling. He was coming back to life. It might be a sign that I was recovering from the first guilt of murder. He

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no longer invariably collapsed when I shot him.

Choked and disgusted, I made myself a warm drink in the kitchen, and then went back to the car and the endless pursuit.

The wind had blown the mists away. I saw herds of wild ponies on either side. The most striking feature of the landscape newly revealed was a line of mountains, not too far distant. Their peaks strutted above the forsaken cities, capped with snow and slow smouldering cloud. And my road led that way.

Since the way was clear, I accelerated, driving as fast as possible all that day, and the next, and the one after that. As I drew nearer the mountains, and they rose in my vision, the sun began setting regularly behind them; or rather, it would give a more accurate picture to say that, during the hours between sunset and sunrise, the mountains cast a great ragged shadow which swung round and outwards from their base, further and further, until it engulfed my tiny speeding vehicle.

Once I turned to look back in the direction I had come. The cities were still just visible. They all huddled together at one point on the plain—or so it appeared. They remained in sunlight.

At last the road began to climb. No longer did it run straight forward. It turned and coiled in order to find its way among the foothills.

There came a point when the plain had fallen some thousands of feet below and behind me. Here was a plateau and again a division of the road. A winding path lay to the left, a straight one—looking as if it might easily run downhill—leading to the right. By the left fork lay a length of muddy and blood-stained bandage. I turned that way and found myself, a day or two later, driving in valleys among snow-capped peaks.

The sense of repetition that then afflicted me will be familiar to anyone who had driven in mountainous country. The road winds and winds to reach one end of a giant recession into the mountains; then it winds in an opposite direction to reach a point but a short distance from the first as the crow flies. Then the same procedure must be repeated at the next reentrant. . . Now this process had to be repeated a hundred times, two hundred, three. . .

Occasionally, my tired brain assured me it saw Victor running screaming before the vehicle, a hole in his lungs and blood at his throat.

I reached the snowline. Nothing grew here, nothing lived.

Still I drove, thinking my quarry must be near. Surely they could not have rivalled my swiftness over the plain!

I climbed towards a great mass.

Beyond were glaciers, snow, huge boulders, a broken line of further peaks. Despite the heating

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in the Felder, my bones were aware of an intense cold outside.

The walls of the pass were high eroded cliffs. The road ran under one cliff. To the other side was the first fan-shaped outcrop of a glacier. The glacier became larger as I drove along by its side, so that the road narrowed, trapped between cliff and glacier. Soon it was squeezed almost to nothing, so that I was forced to stop. There was no way to go further. My path was barred by the debris from the glacier.

Although I knew I had to get up the pass, there was nothing for it but to back away. I returned to the point where a moraine of stones and boulders marked the forward edge of the glacier.

At one spot, a way had been cleared among the stones. Something was lying there. Despite the cold, I climbed out to look. The bloodied leg of a horse, apparently wrenched from its socket, lay with its hoof pointing up into the heart of the glacier.

There was nothing for it but to accept his horrid invitation. I drove the vehicle forward on to the ice.

Travelling with caution, I soon discovered that the surface of ice provided no bad road. It was almost free of debris. Possibly it would be more correct to speak of my being on an ice stream rather than a glacier proper; but I am no expert in such matters. All I can say is that it looked increasingly as if I were in some part of Greenland.

The surface had a ripple pattern, rather like barred sand on a shore where the tide had gone out, which gave the tyres something to grip on.

I had increased speed when a crevasse appeared ahead. Braking immediately, I slowed the engine and threw it into reverse. But the automobile went into a skid, and its front wheels slipped over into the gulf.

I had to climb out. The crevasse was not deep, and not a metre wide. Yet I was securely trapped. I could fit an attachment to the vehicle's nuclear plant which would melt the ice. Or I could try to jack up the front axle. But neither expedient held any guarantee that the Felder would be freed.

Straightening, I looked about helplessly. What a wilderness of rock and ice! Far, far behind and below me, I could catch a glimpse of the plain between two crags. It was marked by little more than a blue-green line. How greatly I had ventured beyond all human contact!

Staring up the ice, in the direction I was planning to go, I saw a familiar figure. Pallid face, black coat, hand at throat as he moved dying over the ice. Victor, eternally returning.

He was calling to me, voice echoing hollowly over the unsympathetic surfaces about us.

I hid my eyes in the palms of my hands, but the voice still cal-

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led. I looked again.

Two figures were up there, monstrous in outline, partly cancelled by the black-lit clouds that came boiling up from behind them and the peaks in the background. They were waving their clumsy arms above their heads to attract my attention. I could make out that they had with them a string of horses, some with packs on their backs. These were presumably a few of the wild horses I had observed on the plain.

For a moment, I was too much taken by surprise to make any gesture back to them. Yet I was glad to see them there. They spoke my language. They were living things, or replicas thereof. Belatedly, it occurred to me that my mission was to kill them; by then, I had acknowledged their presence by waving.

Climbing back into the front seat, I raised the blister in the roof and brought up the muzzle of the swivel gun. If I killed them now, I could take over their horses and make my way back to human society. But, with the auto so down on the front axle, the firing angle was bad. I squinted at them through the telescopic sights and already they were half lost among shattered stones. Evidently satisfied that they had attracted my attention, they were moving on. As much for my own satisfaction as their dismay, I sent half-a-dozen rounds whining over their heads.

They disappeared. Only a pair of black horses remained to be seen. Laying my cheek against the gun, I stared up there where the world seemed to end, too blank of mind to wonder about my predicament. Only gradually did it dawn on me that, though the two immense figures had gone with their train, the two horses remained tethered where they were. My quarry had left me a means of following them, of continuing the chase.

XXVII.

I ATTEMPTED TO HITCH the two horses to the front axle and pull the vehicle out of the crevasse; but it would not budge, or moved only to fall back again. So I had to abandon it.

All I took from it were the remains of my food and water, this tape-memory, my sleeping bag, a stove from the camp-locker (last used on a picnic with Poll and Tony, many worlds ago), and the swivel-gun, which I unbolted from its frame. With the swivel-gun went several magazines of ammunition.

This equipment I loaded onto the smaller of the two horses. I dressed myself in as many clothes as I could, and mounted the other horse. We began to pick our way slowly up the glacier, which now became littered with detritus. The Felder was lost behind us; I left it with less regret than I had parted

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with my watch.

Night fell. Cold streams of air, evenly flowing, breathed on us. Overhead were stars; neither moon was in sight. I looked upwards to identify familiar constellations. Never had so many stars blazed forth—never so unrecognisably. I had been an amateur astronomer; the night sky was no stranger to me; yet I was puzzled. There seemed to be a Pole Star where it should be, and the constellation of Ursa Major, yet with additional stars scattered across it. Yet was not that also Ursa Major and the stars over *there*, lower down the sky and some degrees away, half-concealed by a shoulder of mountain? We picked our way forward so that more stars came into view. . .

Yes, I travelled in a dual universe. The rupture of space/time was spreading in a chain reaction. Who knew what galaxies might exist tomorrow night?

It was absurd to imagine that this damage would be allowed to go on. Already, back in the time from which I came, scientists would be working on the problem, producing some daring solution to it which would successfully put a patch on the damage done. As I intended to put a patch on the damage Victor Frankenstein had done.

Then I reflected that these thoughts could hardly be mine. At first, the jettisoning of my vehicle, like the earlier selling of my watch, had been meaningful to me. Now I was thinking like Victor himself. Tiredness was again invading my mind, conjuring up some of the shadows I had had to battle with back in the ruined cottage.

Rather than rest, I climbed off my horse and led the two beasts forward, determined to stay on my feet for the rest of the night.

But the night seemed to go on forever. Possibly winter had now come, and the sun had slipped below the horizon. It was still dark—or at least not light—when finally I reached the end of my climb and the glacier became level.

Sleep and its delusions had infiltrated my mind. Now I was completely awake again.

A great plateau stretched before me, its limits hidden. It was not entirely flat, exhibiting here and there broad depression or swells, rather like a calm but frozen sea. Only later did I realise that it was almost that. The plateau was formed of ice, a tremendous weight of ice which completely covered the great mountains below, although a few peaks broke the surface here and there in the form of nunataks. Over this great icefield, the nunataks formed the only landmarks, with one staggering exception.

Far away across the icefield was a mighty building.

I halted the animals.

From where I stood, it was hard to grasp the size of that distant structure. It appeared to be

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round and to consist of little more than an immense outer wall. It was certainly inhabited. From within the walls came a glow of light—almost an atmosphere of light, reddish in colour, and punctuated by intenser beams of brightness moving within the central cloud.

Elsewhere, dull depression reigned. Yet this was no bastion of light. For all its brightness, it too—I attempt no paradox—radiated drabness.

My speculation was that this was the last refuge of humanity. The place was so remote that I could only believe the timeslips to have delivered me at a point many centuries—maybe many thousands or even millions of centuries—into futurity. So that I might be witnessing the last outpost of mankind after the sun had died, when the universe itself was far gone towards the equipoise of its death. I looked at my two mounts, their eyes reflecting the distant glow. They waited indifferently. At least I could rejoin my own kind, however unpropitious the circumstances.

As I moved forward at a better pace, it occurred to me to wonder why the enemy should have led me here to a refuge, rather than onward to destruction. Could it be that they also were intending to enter this place? Or were they waiting somewhere to tear me apart before I reached shelter?

Clouds were boiling across the sky, obscuring the maze of constellations and bringing snow. The blaze from the city (I will call it that for cities have taken many forms in history) was reflected on the clouds. Everything appeared to be getting brighter. It was almost as if the city housed a number of active volcanoes. Sparks were now flying above the ramparts, sending bouquets of multi-coloured flame from one end to the other. The searchlight effect was also more powerful. It was as if some kind of celebration was taking place.

Drawing nearer, I could make out that there were gates set in the immense outer walls. And I saw towers within, obscured rather than illuminated by the flickering blaze. It was difficult to gauge size. I suspected they were enormous buildings. Certainly they were imposing; but dystopian visions of buildings come so close to celestial visions that I hardly knew whether the sight of them filled me with comfort or foreboding.

The horses shook their heads and whinnied. I went cautiously, for we were approaching a nunatak, and I feared ambush. I brought up my automatic in a gloved hand.

By now, I appreciated that we rode over thick ice. Shards of it, and shattered slate and stone, fringed the nunatak like a bleak shore. It was possible that this low and scoured dune marked the top of some once-proud mountain, all but lost under the ice sheet. In

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its shelter stood a line of four horses, bridled and hobbled. My quarry had abandoned them, and must be on foot.

There was no sign of the two monsters.

I unloaded the swivel-gun and carried it to the top of the nunatak, sheltering it from the falling snow with my canvas packs. To protect myself from the cold to some extent, I climbed into my sleeping bag before lying down. Then I peered through the telescopic sights and endeavoured to find trace of my quarry.

There they were! Their figures were difficult to discern against the greak dark walls ahead. But their outlines were fitfully picked out by the red light, as the moon first showed itself in crescent form. They had reached the city and were about to go in.

A new suspicion came coldly upon me. I had no guarantee that this city was built by human hands. To what human city would these two outcasts go in such a manner? This was a city that would welcome them—that indeed might be heralding them by a tremendous extravagance of light. This was their sort of city. This was a city built and occupied by their own kind. The future might be theirs and not ours.

Speculation. Confirmation or otherwise must come later.

I jammed a magazine into the breach of the gun. Its code told me that one bullet in five was tracer. A gate was opening in the distant city. From beyond it, light poured over the two enormous figures. I began firing as they started to enter.

A bright line of fire plunged across the intervening space. I saw the first bullets strike, and kept on firing, mouth tight, eye jammed at the sight. One of the figures—the woman—seemed to blaze. She spun about. Her arms jerked up in anger. More tracers poured into her. She appeared to break apart as she fell.

He—he also was hit! But he ran away from the light, so that I no longer had a silhouette as target. I had lost him. Then the sight found him again! He was coming! Making full use of that terrible deadly speed, he was racing across the ice towards me, arms and legs plunging in a speed no human could rival. Fear was a glimpse of that cruel grinning helmet of a face as I wrenched the barrel round for better aim. It stuck.

Cursing, I looked down. One side of my sleeping-bag had caught in the gun's track. It was a moment's work to tear it loose, but in that moment he was nearly up to me.

With a strength almost beyond myself, I raised the gun and fired it from my hip. The tracers caught him as he charged up the slope.

Fire burned at his chest. A great bellow of fury broke from him. He fell backwards, tearing at his burning clothes.

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Shooting off just one burst of tracers had almost broken my body in two. I had to drop the swivel-gun, collapsing to my knees as I did so.

But fear of the monster drove me on. I saw him roll smoking down the slope of the nunatak, to lie face down among rock and ice shards, flames licking at his foul greatcoat. The horses, in wild dismay, broke their tethers and went galloping away across the plains of ice.

Clutching my automatic, I went slowly down to where the great figure lay. It stirred now, turned over, drew itself into a sitting position. Its face was black. Smoke obscured it.

Even in ruin, the monster still exerted that tremendous paralysis of fascination which had deflected my purpose before. I levelled the gun at him, but did not fire—not even when I saw him gather himself to spring to his feet.

He spoke: "In trying to destroy what you cannot understand, you destroy yourself! Only that lack of understanding makes you see a great divide between our natures. When you hate and fear me, you believe it is because of our differences. Oh, no, Bodenland!—It is because of our similarities that you bring such detestation to bear upon me!"

He could not rise. A hollow cough burst from him, and a change took place in that abstract helmet which was his face. The sutures of Frankenstein's surgery parted, ancient cicatrices opened at every contour; the whole countenance cracked, and I saw slow blood ooze in the apertures. He put a hand up—not to his cheeks, but to his chest, where the greater pain was.

"We are of different universes!" I said to him. "I am a natural creature, you are a—a horror, unalive! I was born, you were made—"

"Our universe is the same universe, where pain and retribution rule." His words were thick and slow. "Our deaths are both a quenching out. As for our births—when I first opened my eyes, I knew I existed—as did you. But who I was, or where, or from what cause, I knew not—no more did you! As for those intervals between birth and destruction, my intentions, however warped, are more lucid to me than yours to you, as I suspect. You know not compassion—"

A spasm of pain crossed over him, so that if he could not speak.

Again I nerved myself to fire; a rocket flashed into the sky and burst overhead, deflecting me from my purpose. It opened into three great clusters of flame which hung there, silent, before fading. A signal, perhaps; to whom or what I knew not.

Before the lurid light went out, the monster at my feet said, "This I will tell you, and through you all men, if you are deemed fit to rejoin your kind: that my death will weigh more heavily upon you

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than my life. No fury I might possess could be a match for yours. Moreover, though you seek to bury me, yet will you continuously resurrect me! Once I am unbound, I am unbounded!"

On the word 'resurrect,' delivered with ferocity, the fallen creature heaved himself to his feet and stood confronting me, fire still creeping at his chest and throat. Although he was below me on the slope, he dominated me.

I fired three times, aiming into that voluminous great coat. On the third shot, he went down on to one knee and gave a loud cry, clutching his head. When he looked up again, one side of his face, it appeared to me, had fallen away.

"There will be no more of you!" I said. Sudden triumph and calm filled me.

The creature was gone beyond my influence. He saw me no more. But he spoke again before he died.

"They thought me gone, for I that day was absent, as befell, bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, far on excursion towards the gates of hell, where. . ."

A last attempt to rise, then he lost balance and fell forward, lying face down, one arm twisted out sideways with a clumsy gesture, palm upwards. I left him amid ice and thin smoke, to climb back up the nunatak. The monster was finished, and my quest.

Trembling, I set the swivel-gun to rights. If other attackers came for me, they should meet the same reception as the monster before I met my Maker. Or there might be men in the city; I must assume nothing more until more was known. Certainly they were aware of my presence! Since the rocket died overhead, the lights were being extinguished behind the great ramparts, the activity was ending, the displays were being put away. They would know where I was, and what I had done.

So I would wait here until someone or something came for me, biding my time in darkness and distance.

—BRIAN ALDISS

ON SALE IN JUNE AMAZING—APRIL 25th

OVERLOOKING by *BARRY N. MALZBERG, AS I LIB AND BREED* by *J.W. SCHUTZ, A SECOND DEATH* by *MICHAEL CASSUTT, PIPER, WHAT SONG?* by *DRUSILLA NEWLON CAMPBELL, and the* conclusion of *JOHN BRUNNER'S* greatest novel—*TOTAL ECLIPSE.*

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DAVID R. BUNCH

Come once more with David Bunch to Moderan, where the population has long since shed its humanity and seeks immortality-through-metal–

IN THE LAND THAT AIMED AT FOREVER

THE VAPOR SHIELD was basic brown that month, with overtones that made it almost golden at times and at other times almost gray and grayish black. And though this was usual vapor for October, there was this autumn, grimly, a difference. From somewhere far removed, far out from this Land that Aimed at Forever, a pall of melancholy came, a feeling of closure, of things finished and going into a last white wintertime. (Ah yes, winter still came to the Land that Aimed at Forever, in spite of all the warm vapor shields that were meant to control the sky.)

And though the State set all its tin mandolin-men to playing in yards across the land, and ordered all its happy color-throwers wherever they might be to shoot diversion hues up at the basic brown shield, and though the perfume-men, their atomizers armed with every pleasant scent, ran spraying across the plastic fields and through the yards of towns, and though at night, with the vapor shield ebbed in, the shape-men threw the great pattern panoramas up into the bland, though chilling now, October sky, there was, despite all this, no surcease. The thing that had upset them all was there, continuing, dread in its verdict.

The Council met to hear a fateful proposal put in the form of motion. Stalog Blengue, sitting like a stone near the center of the Council, remote and metal-fogged but clear as to their need, clattered to full stature on his gold-and-silver-and-iron 'replaced' legs to put the awful question before them all. Then they asked in their hearts and they asked each other, "Is this that maximum thing for which we have so long waited and feared? Is this that degree of ultimate contingency for which we have, at almost unheard-of expense, built and equipped and maintained the Maximum Diversion Birds? Shall the Birds go now to distract the fearful people?"

The debate raged in Council for five contestful days. Meanwhile, the people drew what comfort and diversion they could from the magic in the yards, the color-throwers, the perfume-men, the pattern display in the black-blue October nights, and sometimes,

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feeling great pity for the shaken people, the Central Station would throw the switch and press the button that would spring up the pansy lids. Then all over that broad land, in all the plastic yards, in all the fields of fall, flowers would leap through the yard holes and wave a bit of May on spring-metal stems, even though grimly it was October. And through it all, in the very most central province of the Land that Aimed at Forever, that dread reality lay—yes, lay and mocked them all in the shack of stubborn old Grandpa Zagk.

In the debate in Council almost every speaker, whether for or against the proposal to use the Birds, took the opportunity to describe in oratory each tedious detail of the maximum things he thought the Birds could do. It was told by one Council member how, from the giant 'cages' on the perimeter of Preparedness Field, the Birdmen would spring them up, how the vapor shield would be special-brown that day, how the silver of two million great wings all together would make a blinding show as soaring they rode quietly in the searchlights for a moment just above the buildings. Then, as at a signal, they would in a compelling show of raw power flap a cadenced rhythm to step into the brown autumnal sky, all for the height of perhaps a quarter of a mile, and they would open their mouths than all at once, with a bright fluid streaming out to form the figures of people in the vapor shield, brighter red than the blood that used to be and grotesque beyond all common imagining. Following that would come the sense-chilling noise, a special shrill and grating cry from the throats of a million birds, and then, with little brown sacks of oil, they would start bombing the people, all out in the yards now to watch the Birds. Following the oil bombardment there would come more intensive bombing with small bags of common sand and other grimes and grits that had been swept up by Central Sweep in the daily rounds and packaged in the neat gritty-grime bombs. Then, after the last sand bomb and the last neat gritty-grime bomb had tumbled from the sky, the dead cold moment of silence would come, just before all the Birds, having changed their tapes, would sing forth happy tunes of celebration and dancing. Compelled by the happy tunes to jump and pirouette in the streets of their own special City of Joy the hapless people of the State that Aimed at Forever would be completely diverted, what with the oil from the sky dripping from them, and the sand and other grimy quantities quite covering them and working into their metaled joints and grinding at the join cracks between flesh-strip and 'replacement.' For these people, you must know, were not usual in the Land that Aimed at

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Forever. Eternity for them had been plotted by a science that worked full days and went that 'extra mile' in discoveries; through 'replacement' they were designed for forever. And who could say that it was not great and who could say that it was not possible? After the last of the last flesh-strip had been taken by new-metal? Their scientists said yes—*yes!* And time, the last lone counting arbiter, had not as yet convinced them how harshly it must finally deal with such upstart and impossible dreams and such arrogant aspirations.

After five minutes of spirited dancing by all the captive folk, according to the fanciful legislator, the Council would broadcast a short announcement advising the people to again take up their courage, go home, clean off the oil and grime as best they could and resume their normal everlasting lives for the glory of the State. Toward the end of the announcement, in a voice of casual afterthought, high points from the News-of-the-Day would be given. A careful and clever allusion would be made, hinting that in the interests of research—do not fret—things were as they were and should be in the house of Grandpa Zagk.

Some members were inclined to titter at this view of Maximum Diversion as given by one legislator. But no one tittered, I believe, at the gravity of the problem they all faced. However, in the end, after all the debate, and by the narrowest of margins, it was decided not to use the Maximum Diversion Birds. Quiet on their pads they stayed, like giant monuments to waste and fanciful expenditures, in the huge Bird 'cages' at Preparedness Field.

Quite another course was taken finally to shield the people from worry about the dread condition that lay at Zagk's house. The Central Council took measures, such as declaring a government preserve of all the fields and yards immediately adjacent to the house of this wilful and stubborn old man who had upset the plans and calculations of an entire state. On the perimeter of this restricted space, giant sun-scopes and reflectors were installed to make, on vaporless days when the sun was allowed to shine, such a ring of heat and light around the new government preserve that no one dared to look in that direction. At night or on days when the sun was not allowed to shine, the eyes of the curious were barred from prying at Grandpa Zagk's house by light beams of such candle power that he who looked more than a glance that way was never able to see again, and all the parts of his eyes that were not 'replaced' became black and dead. But the basis of the problem was not attacked at all, for the cold real truth is this: even the Central Council, with its giant brains searching steadily through the green liquids in the metal brain

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pans, was starkly and chillingly stalemated. Nowhere could they find a way to regain for themselves and for their country what Grandpa Zagk had lost for them all.

Stalling for time the Council broadcast bulletins daily to the effect that all was well with Grandpa Zagk. The reflectors and sunscopes, the light and power of the searing beams—all were explained as tribute to a hero, a kind of perpetual adulation. He was pictured as a 'first,' the earliest man of history to get the Certificate of Complete Replacement and be destined to live an active corporeal life forever. Then statues, life-size, almost exact replicas of Grandpa, began to spring up all over that plastic land.

It was during this period of statues that hints began to come in the news, subtle suggestions that rounded out the Council's plans for a final solution, so far as they would ever be capable of a final solution, of the Grandpa Zagk question. In the most oblique of ways and by the most tangential of methods it was hinted that it was not entirely alien to possibility, even probability, that Grandpa Zagk might be leaving on a trip. Any day now. *Yes!* He might yield to popular galactic demand and go away to other peoples, and for a long time, to show them at first-hand the wondrous reality of himself, the all-replaced new-metal forever-man. If he went, he most surely would go alone in a bright new, most gleamy, wonderful and fast, latest fashion in space boats. *Yes!*

Then, on a night of compulsory celebration, when the automatic bands were up in all the bandstands, when projectile cases of praise flashed through the sky for the 'first,' when all the light and noise and explosion of whoopee raged far and wide, five Council members, wearing the special glasses that only they could own, stepped into the terrible beams and went down the road to Grandpa. By an old speckled building, the Grandpa Zagk house, a new lean space boat lay.

On a sack of blue gander feathers he had kept from his childhood days in Olderun, lying moveless as an iron log, Grandpa Zagk seemed not to regard the EVERLASTING-ACTIVE-LIFE certificate he held in metaled replaced' hands. And he seemed entirely unabashed that, lying like a corpse, he was violating the spirit of the award somewhat and making a joke of the code of the Land that Aimed at Forever. But around the frozen corners of his mouth there hovered a subtle smirk, almost as if he were aware, almost as if he knew— He did not move or talk when by the secret lid they took him through the floor. He made no sign of protest when they thumbed the small gate back in the dark passage, and he seemed entirely uncaring when they put him on the subter-

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ranean car. They rode a long time in the underground passage then, the grim Council members, with Grandpa Zagk like an iron joke among them. . . While high above them the sky ran with light where a new lean space boat leaped through the vapor shield; made stars danced and words of comment branded on the clouds, spelled out in letters of dazzling brilliance twenty-five miles high and half that wide, made the allusions: GRANDPA ZAGK LOVES PEOPLE OF OTHER LANDS. *Grandpa Zagk Must Show People of Other Lands His Wonderful New-Metal Body.* –GOOD-BY, GOOD LUCK, WE LOVE YOU, GRANDPA ZAGK. . .

That night, deep underground, in a far-away corner of the State, where the subterranean car reached the farthest limit of its passage in one direction, yet another 'statue' was installed for Grandpa.

—DAVID R. BUNCH

A New Life (cont. from page 37)

— I go — I come — we bright/dark/movement — love — warmth — together — bursting star — bursting steel brick —

Cirella waited. She went out. He heard the glad cries and felt jealous. He thought of Juno and thrust her away. *She was for then, Loree is for now.*

There was faint music, then cheers and more music and more shouts. Then she was back, golden and gleaming, flushed and smiling.

"Come," she said, flinging on a shiny dark cape. He followed her out of the dome and to the so-called Pagan section. Here even the police went in triples, or not at all. But no one bothered either of them. Dark-faced men looked at her, their eyes hard with lust, but no one said anything.

She turned and went down a narrow stairs and then through a plain door. Cirella followed her into a small lush garden under warm solax lights. Over a tiny pool and into a huge room filled with pads and cushions.

Loree dropped her cape and let the crillon float to the floor. She smiled at Cirella.

— now — warmth — movement — skin — heat — blood-flesh — now —

—*what do I do?*

— bursting steel brick — laughter — heat — warmth — star — stars green planet — now — flesh — bare flesh—

Cirella soon was as naked as she. The golden nude came toward him, her eyes bright.

—now—

—*now*—

JUNO WONDERED all through the waiting period just where the hell Cirella had gone, but when she was given her release she sold all his personal things and used the money to buy passage to Cuidad Guadalajara.

"A new place gives you a new life, don't you think?" she asked the first man she met.

"But of course," he said, smiling, his head busy with images of her in various postures.

—WILLIAM ROTSLER

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WAR BABY

AL SIROIS

It was a most unusual occurrence on this world of perpetual war . . .

IT WAS A PLANET entwined with a spaghetti-mess of wires, circuits and weapons, with never-lived-in cities dotted here and there like spatters of ink from a shaken pen. It was an electronic jungle injected with mines, shrouded with ion curtains, mosquitoed with drone rocketplanes. Lasers blinked in its cities at night. Searchlights raked the air gently. Radar infected the atmosphere; sonar was diffused in the sea.

He was a soldier, computer-nourished, militarily taught, with emotions artificially suppressed. Parts of him had been removed and replaced with weapons: he could fire bullets through his left index finger; he could touch certain teeth with his tongue and he would see in the infra-red; he could hear into the super- and sub-sonic; his skin was blotched brown and green for camoflage with sub-cutaceous chemicals. His fingernails were as sharp as broken glass, and his feet had been genetically mutated into monkey hands.

If he had ever owned a name, he didn't know about it. His serial number was engraved on a molar and tattooed across his left breast.

Other worlds fought their wars on the Battleworld, being unwilling to damage their own, and they made soldiers like him because they were unwilling to destroy their citizens. There was always a waiting list of antagonists. Some planets applied for battle time without a specific enemy; there was certain to be one waiting. Sometimes it could be extremely interesting to play against someone you didn't know.

Once, a planet had gotten its application forms mixed and had had to fight itself.

Now the soldier crouched in a dirty alley that had never seen a day or night of peace. It, like all the streets and avenues and alleys in the dummy city, was a potential death trap.

A car full of killers drove slowly past the opening of the alley. Did they know he was here? His lips folded back in an unconscious snarl.

SHE WAS A SOLDIER TOO. She was even more efficient at murder than he. She slunk through back yards and across lightless rooftops in search of the enemy. She was black, black. Her eyeballs, her teeth, her nails. . . .black with a chemical that had dripped into

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her blood as she floated, a curled fetus, in a glass tube somewhere on another planet years ago. She had been specifically constructed for noctural commando work, and she knew her job well. In her two decades of life she had killed four hundred and thirty three *"enemies."*

She landed cat-soft in a garbage-piled doorway, alertness crackling through her like electricity. No one was near. Silently she tried the doorknob, and it turned. The door opened and she stepped inside, searching for a place to spend the night.

The building was of course empty. No one had ever lived in it or worked in it or made love in it. Its builders had finished it in three days and gone on to the next site. When the city was completed they had gone on again, and on and on and on until the planet was ready. Then they left, into space, and switched the world on like a huge model train layout. Then the soldiers had come.

She scraped some dust together in a corner and lay down. Her eyes closed and she slept.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER he stood in the same doorway amidst the carefully-constructed plastic garbage. He too needed a place to sleep for a while. He entered the building noiselessly and halted as he heard the soft wet sound that came from a corner; her eyes had opened.

They met in mid-air in the center of the naked room.

He exulted as his outstretched arms caught her full in the face. She slipped unconscious to the floor. He saw by infra-red that she was female.

They had changed his outward appearance and a good deal of his inner workings but they couldn't tamper with his basic drives without damaging them; they needed his survival instinct. And his reproductive instinct lay, if anything, even deeper.

For about fifteen minutes he was a human being. Then, confused by the actions of his body, he left her and went out into the city to find the enemy.

WHEN THE ALARMS and bells sounded she did not respond to their call. She was hunched over in a celler, frightened and awed by something much stronger than artificially-induced murderous abilities.

SHE HID for a very long time, seeking food and water only when near to collapse. Several wars thundered by her.

ONE NIGHT she was suddenly caught in a searchlight beam. A laser hummed and destroyed the top quarter of her body as bullets tore open her swollen belly.

The soldiers were puzzled. This was not one that they were programmed to recognize as an "enemy".

(cont. on page 112)

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Kendall Evans is a newcomer to these pages, with a short and delightful twist on Kafka's–

METAMORPHOSIS

KENDALL EVANS

INCENSE WAS BURNING, sending transparent black scarfs of smoke coiling toward the ceiling of my dim, third floor apartment; Alice was in the kitchen making coffee, and I was methodically rubbing calamine lotion on a persistent rash of insanity. When I heard the screams of agony pierce the afternoon tranquility, I struggled from my iron lung into the wheel chair, wheeled over to the window, and stared down at a shocking and pathetic scene: a tall, dark-haired man, obviously the criminal type, was pistol-whipping a little old lady.

Alice, a dumb redhead I keep around to enhance my sexual frustration, brought my crutches to me from the bedroom. As she crossed the room with them I noticed for the first time the elaborate rococo pattern of the rug, and it struck me as absurd how little we discern as we trip blithely through life.

But I digress. Alice, in a typically jocund mood, refused to offer me the crutches until I said "please."

Alice has the mind of a three-year-old.

"Please give me the crutches, Alice."

"Do you love me?"

"You know I do."

"You never show it."

This is a sore point with me, as you might well guess. I grabbed the crutches from her and pinched her bottom, all in a single skillful maneuver. She clucked appreciatively and returned to the kitchen to finish making the coffee. Meanwhile, down the street, the little old lady was still receiving a severe pistol-whipping, and the intensity of her screams had increased, if anything. Suddenly I admired the old girl's spunk; she reminded me of my mother. My mother also had a pretty good set of lungs.

Sedulous efforts got me up on my crutches, where I paused briefly. My body was bathed in sweat, my breaths came in short gasps. I lighted a cigarette and moved toward the door, thinking of the three flights of stairs I would have to descend.

On the first flight of steps a little girl, her hair done up in braids, was playing jacks. I ignored her. I also ignored the dirty words and phrases scrawled on the wall. I did jot down a few of

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the phone numbers, however.

The first two flights of stairs were fine. Starting down the third I tripped, and went heels over head all the way to the bottom. As I struggled to disentangle myself from the crutches, I realized that this was probably the quickest and most efficient way to handle stairways in emergency situations such as the one in which I now found myself involved.

I could still hear the little old lady's screams, and twinges of empathy pulsed through my system.

I got to my feet, lodged the crutches in my armpits, and shuffled through the double glass doors, out of the apartment building. Viewing the scene in the street, identical to that I had seen from my window, I murmured determinedly: "This looks like a job for. . . ."

There was a phone booth set against the drug store adjacent the apartment building from which I had but moments before emerged. Once inside that phone booth I snicked the door shut behind me, and heaved a heavy sigh of relief.

Stooping over as I lifted my leg, I touched my tongue to the base of my right shoe. As I straightened up, a thin gossamar strand was exuded from my mouth. The end clung to the base of my shoe. I wove the moist, glistening thread about myself in serpentine curves, horizontal zigzags, and vertical lines, until I was completely covered from head to toe, concealed in a white cocoon produced by the peculiar make-up of my personal physiological structure. The calm of the womb came over me. Instants later the changes began, both physical and psychological. All this would take time, I knew. I felt my emotions take on exhilarating proportions. My ego expanded as it was nurtured from mysterious depths, deep unconscious sources. Flaccid muscles swelled and achieved impossible tone, my bone structure strengthened, my flesh slowly became impenetrable. Soon now, I thought.

I hoped I would not be too late.

—KENDALL EVANS

War Baby (cont. from page 110)

And they had never seen anything like the black and green and brown thing (it almost looked like a little man) that had been ripped out of her stomach by the bullets.

—LEWIS S. ALLYN

ON SALE NOW IN SF ADVENTURES—(May)

THE BRAIN by *ALEXANDER BLADE*, *VENUS-WORLD OF MYSTERY* by *WILLY LEY*, *THE FREELANCE OF SPACE* by *EDMOND HAMILTON*, *THE FRIGHTENED PLANET* by *SIDNEY AUSTIN*, *IT HAPPENED IN SPACE* by *MANY WADE WELLMAN*, *LANDSCAPES of LUNA* by *BOB OLSEN*.

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Reviewed by FRITZ LEIBER

AMPHIGOREY, *Fifteen Books by Edward Gorey*, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972, $12.95.

THE EPIPLECTIC BICYCLE, by Edward Gorey, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1969

THE AWDREY-GORE LEGACY, by Edward Gorey, Dodd, Mead and Co., 1972

IN THE September 1973 issue of this magazine, I promised to write some more about the stories Edward Gorey tells in many genteely decadent pictures and a few sly Victorian words. The bulk are either Gothic horror novels in miniature and cautionary accounts of horrid dooms visited on the innocent. Their literary precursors are the *Bab Ballads* of Sir William Schwenk Gilbert and the nonsense verse of Edward Lear, some of which Gorey has illustrated. While more tenuous parallels can be pointed to in the gruesome ballads of Thom Lehrer and the cartoons of Charles Addams.

Amphigorey is made up of Gorey's first fifteen little books, published between 1953 and 1965. Taking them in chronological order—

The Unstrung Harp recounts the miseries and frustrations suffered by Mr. Earbrass in writing and seeing through publication a novel with that title.

The Listing Attic is sixty illustrated limericks with dismal last lines. The ultimate, in French like four others, introduces the Black Doll, an armless mannikin signifying The End, which thereafter haunts both Gorey and the reader.

The Doubtful Guest tells of the mute intrusion of a black, penguinesque creature in tennis shoes into an Edwardian household.

The Object-Lesson is a doleful exercise in non sequitur, taking us from a missing artificial limb, by way of the Throbblefoot, Spectre and the statue of Corrupted Endeavor, to a "tea-urn empty save

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for a card on which was written the single word: Farewell."

The Bug Book is a simple tale, enlivened by four colors, of an insect utopia lost and regained.

The Fatal Lozenge is a dreary alphabet book, running from Apparition, Baby and Cad to Xenophobe, Yegg, and Zouave.

The Hapless Child narrates Fate's wanton persecution of one such. A tiny dark salamander keeps peering in.

The Curious Sofa, subtitled *A Pornographic Work by Ogdred Weary,* devotes itself to the debauching of Alice in ways left to the reader's imagination, which is not required to work hard.

The Willowdale Handcar, or the Return of the Black Doll, is Gorey's Gothic masterpiece, recounting the long and ultimately tragic vacation taken by three adult children—Edna, Harry, and Sam—under the influence of the evil genius mentioned in the subtitle. Just enough plot is suggested to make the reader uneasily certain there *is* one, and keep him hunting the pictures for the missed detail that will throw eerie light on the relationship between the financier Titus W. Blotter, the poetess Mrs. Regera Dowdy, the ill-starred Nellie Flim, the man lurking inside the ruins of the Crampton vinegar works, and the Iron Hills.

The Vinegar Works, embellished with charming skulls, comprises *The Gashlycrumb Tinies,* an alphabet book of infant mortality; *The Insect God,* a morally instructive volume on the ritual murder of the four-year-old Millicent Frastley; and *The West Wing,* a disturbing sequence of gloomy interiors, in one of which the Black Doll dangles a-twitch from a ceiling.

The Wuggly Ump, tinted here and there with pale yellow and blue, tells of that omnivorous monster's ingestion of three idyllic children.

The Remembered Visit, featuring some marvelous neglected topiary, or monkey puzzles, is a short story of an almost-communication between a lonely, eleven-year-old girl and an elderly expatriate, which might well have been written by Henry James or Katherine Mansfield.

The cover of *Amphigorey* is in building-block capitals enlivened by the Black Doll and a Fat Cat addicted to stripped sweaters, socks, and scarves—who earlier made an appearance at Bogus Corners in *The Willowdale Handcar.* On the back the same letters spell out Gryphoemia. (The heroine of a forgotten nineteenth-century novel? A morbid affliction of the toes?)

The Epiplectic Bicycle is another children's vacation on a title-vehicle, enlivened by alligators and obelisks.

The Awdrey-Gore Legacy, dedicated to Agatha Christie, concerns the disappearance in 1927 of a best-selling mystery writer and her reappearance dead in

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1971—and an oiled-silk packet done up with mauve string and indigo blue sealing wax, discovered beneath an elephant's foot umbrella stand, and containing what appears to be an elaborate set of plot cards useful in writing any English vicarage-and-teaparty detective story (such as *The Toastrack Enigma* or *The Blancmange Tragedy,* which help decorate the cover)—and which are filled in with what may be a solution to it all.

Gorey turns up many places. What appears to be a shortened version of *The Deranged Cousins* appears in No. 50 of the French cartoon magazine *Charlie,* which features everything from *Peanuts* to *Popeye*—in French. Its most interesting series is Gudio Crepax's *Marianna,* narrative of a Barbarella-like girl named Valentina, who has a twin named Marianna, who is an electronic robot and helps transport Valentina into parallel worlds, where she endures various stylish sadisto-masochistic embarrassments, frequently scrubbing floors in a complicated erotic harness and muzzle, sometimes being saddled and ridden by a French girl-old-lady, sometimes otherwise tormented by a mannish elderly lady speaking English or German.

Gorey was born in the 1920s, lives in New York and New England, and likes cats. He is of course not the only artist to create little Gothic novels in pictures. There is Lynn Ward, whose *God's Man* and *Madman's Drum,* both done in woodcuts, without words, are marvelously doomful. While Masreel's similar *The Passionate Journey* has its eerie moments.

I can't leave this topic without mentioning that I recently saw a Mickey Mouse short, "The Mad Doctor," which the Disney Studios at one time disavowed (I am told) because of its horror content. To rescue Pluto from a mad scientist, Mickey braves a castle guarded by skeletons, including that of a spider with six legs —stuff that settled very deep into my subconscious when I first saw the film as a boy.

—FRITZ LEIBER

ON SALE NOW IN APRIL AMAZING

The first part of *JOHN BRUNNER'S GREAT NOVEL, TOTAL ECLIPSE, UPPING THE PLANET* by *BARRY N. MALZBERG, WHAT WAS THAT?* by *F.M. BUSBY, AFTER YOU'VE STOOD ON THE LOG AT THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE, WHAT IS THERE LEFT TO DO?* by *GRANT CARRINGTON, FOUND IN SPACE* by *R. MONROE WEEMS, LOCAL CONTROL* by *SANFORD ZANE MESKOW,* and many new features.

BACK ISSUES S-F MAGAZINES

AMAZING & FANTASTIC (1963-1973), THRILLING SF, SF ADVENTURES (Classics), SF GREATS, STRANGE FANTASY, SPACE ADVENTURES, THE STRANGEST STORIES EVERY TOLD, SF CLASSICS, WEIRD MYSTERY, SCIENCE FANTASY, most issues available (60¢) plus 15¢ copy to cover mailing costs-ULTIMATE PUB. CO. Box 7, Flushing N.Y. 11364.

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Editorial (cont. from page 4)
first year as a fanzine publisher—1953. Thereafter, publicly acknowledged as a hoax of mine, Edwards became a character in a variety of short stories I published in my fanzines. These stories were known at that time as "fan-fiction" to differentiate them from the amateur sf which appeared in many fanzines of the time; "fan-fiction" is fiction about fans. Edwards was a perenial neofan, beset by nearly every problem which could occur to a new fan of those days.

In 1963 Terry Carr and I collaborated on an extremely minor (and now out of print) sf novel under the name of "Norman Edwards." The name came from the combination of Jay Edwards' name with that of Norman Sanfield Harris—a name Terry had put to similar use during roughly the same period of time I was using Edwards'. Our own private joke.

Thereafter Edwards receded into the background of our memories for a period of many years. But in late 1969, increasingly unhappy with the quality of the covers then appearing on this magazine, I decided to take over their direction myself. This I did, but I did nothing about the fact that one "Harry Lee" was credited as the magazine's Art Director until I redesigned the contents page as well—at which point I decided the long-gone Mr. Lee had enjoyed masthead credit long enough. I decided that it was time "J. Edwards" took over his slot.

Basically, then, the title and position are fictitious. The Publisher and I split the actual art direction between us. It works like this:

I am responsible for the covers. (I'll go into more detail on the covers later.) I also designed the column headings (like the one for this editorial), working with artists Mike Hinge and Michael Nally. (Hinge's column headings originally appeared in both magazines; they continue to appear in AMAZING, but have been replaced here by Nally's.) And I did the basic contents-page layout presently in use in both magazines. I also select the artist who will illustrate each story and assign the story to him (more about this later). That covers my responsibilities.

The Publisher is responsible for the actual content of the contents page—the choice of whose story is boxed, etc.—and for the arrangement within an issue of the stories, the continuations, the style and size of type used for story titles and author by-lines, as well as the actual layout of each story's title page, and the overall makeup of an issue.

COVERS: When I became editor of this magazine, some five years ago, the covers were, in a word, awful. They were reprints from Italian and German sf pulps, sold in this country by the Three

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Lions Agency, who were at that time selling covers to Ultimate Publications for FANTASTIC and AMAZING, to Popular Library (who used a number on the paperback republications of the Captain Future novels), and to *Galaxy* and *If* (which, if memory serves me rightly, used only a few).

Not only were these cover illustrations of a fairly low artistic quality, they were also entirely too often plagiarisms. One, which unfortunately showed up on both one of our magazines (long before my association with them) *and* a Popular Library paperback, was a direct steal from a mid-60's *Analog* cover by Schoenherr, for example. (It wasn't caught until after publication here because none of those involved with the publications were familiar with the original—and vastly superior—*Analog* cover.)

Additionally, the layout of our covers was done by a New York City commercial art director in his spare time. He obviously spent very little time on them. The choice of type was pedestrian and the layouts were functional at best and often clumsy. The overall effect was not handsome.

As it happens, my earliest ambition had been to become an artist, and later I had done a considerable amount of layout and art direction work for fan publications (including a SF Worldcon Program & Memory Book) as well as some professional free-lance mechanical work for Scribners. When the opportunity arose to take over the layout and design of the covers, I took it.

Several separate factors are involved. The first is the selection of the cover painting. I have been extremely fortunate in the artists who, early on, made their work available to me. Gray Morrow and Jeff Jones were instrumental in helping me to bring back new, original cover paintings. (My first cover design was our last reprint—on the March, 1970, issue of AMAZING. My second was Jeff Jones' still very striking cover for Fritz Leiber's "The Snow Women", on the April, 1970, issue of this magazine.) Since then established artists like John Pederson and Dan Adkins, as well as newcomers like Steve Harper and Mike Kaluta have contributed cover paintings. We debuted Mike Hinge's startlingly original paintings on these magazines, and more recently we've had more submissions from young artists than we could use, even if every one of them had been superb —which not all have been, of course.

Unfortunately, we have a very tight budget, and consequently pay poorly. As a result, we normally purchase only first-use or one-time use—not the actual painting itself. We also, on the advice of Mike Hinge and Jeff Jones—who have researched the applicability of copyright law to an artist's work—give the artist a

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separate copyright notice on the contents page of each issue. And, whenever possible, I work closely with the artist on the layout of his painting. (Jeff Jones routinely sends layouts when he has a specific layout in mind, and also suggests the colors appropriate for the type. Mike Hinge also exercises supervision over the colors used for type with his paintings.)

If *you* are an artist who wants to submit a painting for consideration, my first suggestion is that you have a good color transparency made. A 35mm slide is permissable, but, truthfully, I think it tends toward graininess when blown up to full-cover size—as can be seen on the cover for our November, 1973, issue. A somewhat larger transparency is to be preferred. Don Davis uses transparencies roughly the size of a 3x5 file card; Mike Hinge uses 8x10 transparencies but these are relatively expensive to have made (Hinge also uses his transparencies in his portfolio, however). The transparency, whatever its size, should be as true as possible to the original color values of the painting, and should contain no distortion or lighting variations or highlights. If your painting is purchased for use, the cover will be shot directly from the transparency, so the transparency should be as true as possible to the original painting, for your satisfaction as well as ours.

The basic advantages in submitting a transparency are these:

1. Your painting remains at all times in your own hands. Since the average painting is fairly large, it would run a risk of damage in the mails—and would, of necessity, be in the mails at least five separate times before its return to you. (Mike Kaluta's cover for our February, 1973, issue was cracked right down the middle by the Post Office when he mailed it from Manhattan to Queens—in New York City.) And, since we cannot immediately schedule or use a painting upon its receipt and purchase, you might well not see your painting for a period of from six months to a year and a half, on the average. (The waiting period reflects several factors. One is our present inventory of paintings; another is the appropriateness of your painting to a given issue. We'll come back to that.)

2. When an engraver works with the physical painting, he lights and shoots it—sometimes with disasterous results, as those of you who have a copy of the September, 1971, issue of AMAZING will recall. (On that cover a supposedly solid-black space background was overlit and not only came out a charcoal grey, but showed the texture of brush strokes as well.) This entire problem is avoided when a transparency is used.

3. A transparency is much smaller and easier to handle, and, in the event of loss or damage, can be replaced.

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FROM THE ABOVE, readers can probably deduce one reason why our covers are often not directly illustrative of a given story. In many cases I try to pick covers which suggest or evoke the mood of a story in that issue, periodically I assign a painting to an author to write a story around it, and every once in a while the cover *is* painted to go with a given story. All of Mike Kaluta's covers for us, for instance, are painted in direct illustration of the current serial. In the case of submissions from other parts of the country, from artists previously unknown to us, there is no opportunity to have the painting illustrate a specific story. Equally important, at the low rates we're forced to pay, the question of deadlines and story-illustration becomes a hassle perhaps greater than justified by the payment involved. In most cases the artists who do our cover paintings do those paintings primarily for their own pleasure, for their own satisfaction—and then allow us to use the painting as a cover. This philosophy has worked well for us, I think: it has certainly resulted in a number of uncommonly fine covers for us from artists who can command far higher prices in other markets, like Jones and Hinge.

What happens *after* a painting is selected for a particular cover? That's where I come in. I prepare the type, the layout and the mechanical. The latter is the final form in which the cover type will appear. It is prepared at the same size as the published cover, in black and white. It contains all the cover type, both spine and front cover, including the logo, date and price, and any lines or borders. It will be photographed by the engraver, and contains, on an overlay sheet, explicit instructions to the engraver for the colors of all type and lines and positioning of the painting (which may be framed and offset from the type, like our last cover, or full-cover with type overlaid, like that November, 1973, cover).

Although I could do as my predecessor did and order type set from a local type company, I prefer not to. It limits flexibility. Instead, I set my own type, using commercially available press-apply type by Letraset, Prestype and Paratype. These come in sheets in a variety of sizes and styles. My current inventory includes several hundred sheets of type, most of it display type in the 36-point size, which I find an adequate compromise between size (for ease of handling) and number of letters per sheet (which decreases with the larger sizes). Over the past year I've added a number of the more modern, catchy faces to this type-inventory.

It's a slow job, rubbing down each story title and author's name letter by letter (and inasmuch as it is the Publisher's set policy that all stories will, when possible, appear on the cover, that aspect of

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the covers is not under my control), but I enjoy it. It gives me a quiet evening or two at the drafting board, with the FM tuned to a local rock station, usually WHFS. I use light-blue, lined, 8 to the inch graph paper for setting the type, since this allows precise allignment and spacing.

The set type is then photostatted down to size, and pasted up on the mechanical. I have had trouble finding a good photostat house in Washington, D.C., and have yet to find one equal to Gil's Photoprint, a Times Square area shop located in a subway arcade in New York City. Each month when I take in my type I can never be sure whether it will actually be statted to the specified size, shot sharply or blurrily, come out wavey-lined, be clean or covered with dirt specks. On occasion when a stat simply won't hold the detail of the original type, I use it on the mechanical only for position and send the engraver the original type as well.

This is a hand-crafted way to prepare our covers, I admit, but it gives me the control and flexibility I want, and the result, in my opinion, has been a steadily improving set of standards for our covers.

WHAT ABOUT INTERIOR ART? you may ask. Periodically would-be artists send me samples of their work. On occasion these samples are really fine. On other occasions they are not. Strangely, the poorest work is most often accompanied by the most beligerant notes, along the line quoted at the beginning of this editorial. I remain astonished at the number of would-be artists who lack all objective standards when judging their own work. Entirely too many of these more amateurish samples are apparently by young comics fans who have much to learn about basic anatomy and composition and who are entirely too greatly influenced by the superhero comics. (A close second among the poorer amateurs would be those whose samples are bad sword & sorcery drawings showing Conan-like heroes in superhero-type poses; I presume the influences are similar.)

Unfortunately, with rare exceptions the interior art in these magazines is done by artists who live in or around New York City or here in the Washington, D.C. area. This is dictated by the circumstances under which the magazines are produced; our interior artists must work to very short deadlines (rarely more than a week or two), from stories set in galleys. Because the type is set before the illustration is drawn, we must stick to a fairly standard format—the one-column illustration—for the bulk of our stories. I would like to be able to make use of talented artists in other parts of the country but as yet I've not found a practical means of doing so, although this is a problem on which I'm work-

(cont. on page 129)

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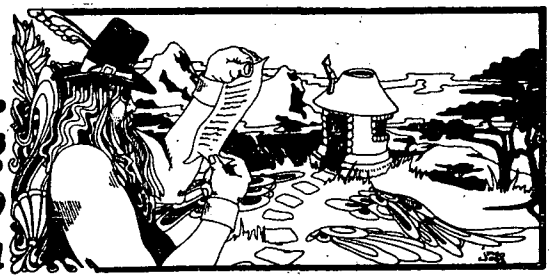
...According to You



Letters intended for publication should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of each sheet, and addressed to According to You, *Box 409, Falls Church, Va., 22046.*

Dear Ted,

Just as November came rolling along I received the November FANTASTIC. After reading the issue, I decided to write making a few comments.

First of all, the cover. Well, I found it average for your magazine—but if it were the cover of any other magazine I might consider it exceptional. In any case, Dan Schilling has a promise of talent. The interior illos were good as usual, though I didn't like the one by Panebaker for the Haldeman story. As a whole this issue had a rather pleasing look.

Your editorial strikes me as rather irrelevant (maybe because you are much nearer Watergate than I). It looked to me like you had written that editorial at the spur of the moment, lacking any better sublects. I am worried about your type-size, though. Your magazines have been presenting such a standard of quality that I would hate to miss any real part of it—even if it's a feature.

The initiative of reprinting Dozois' speach is worthy of his praise. As you know, not all your readers are fans, but most of them probably feel an affinity with fandom. This article will be especially interesting for these people. I found the lettercolumn of little interest this issue, though normally I like it very much. As to Fritz Leiber's book reviews, I tend to prefer the more critical kinds of reviews, which unfortunately are not what Leiber does. . .well, you can't please everybody all the time!

Now to the stories. I found "Junction" to be exceptionally good, but I'm not sure if it lives up to the praise you had been giving it. I feel that Jack could have made the story longer, adding more detail and feeling, and obtaining a more completed work. Since Jack is new as a writer, I am willing to wait for his second or third novel—we may yet see miracles from this Dann (and please, Ted, try not to let him

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leave your magazines: he has already become a necessary presence).

"Trapped in the Shadowland" is at best a poor story. This is of course surprising, since the stories of this series have had before this a standard of writing much superior to what we witness here. The story has no action, no crisis, and ultimately no interest. Fafhrd and the Mouser do not do much—they are saved by their mentors and that is all. I don't get the point. To me, this story seems to be an interlude between episodes of a greater work. . . I hope the next Leiber stories of the two are more well-written.

"Ghang Bhang", and Jack C. Haldeman II has done it again! I found this little story to be very interesting, and, most of all, its punch line is exceptional. Oh, well, what can a critic-at-heart (me) say about a good story? All I can do is give it a standing ovation.

"War of the Magicians" and "A Matter of Time" were exceptionally uninteresting. I found both of them rather predictable. I can still see more merit in Rotsler's story, but why publish such a monument to repetitive ideas and lack of originality as is that Jim Ross piece? I am befuddled. "Triptych", though an ambitious story, was only average. It is a story that intends to transmit a message, but does not make the message clear. The result is that there are countless different interpretations. I need my philosophy to be explicit—so I didn't like it all that much.

Seeing it in perspective, the issue is worth the trouble. In fact, it is a much better issue, from an overall point of view, than most of the more recent issues. This represents progress—so keep it up.

To end up, a question that must be in the mouths of all your non-fan readers—who won the Hugos?

FERNANDO QUADROS GOUVÊA
Largo da Batalha 92
04031 São Paulo, São Paulo,
BRASIL

I listed the Hugo winners (plus the second- and third-place runners up) in my editorial in the February AMAZING, *but here (without the runners up) are the winners as announced at the Torcon 2 in Toronto, Labor Day, 1973: Best Novel,* The Gods Themselves *by Isaac Asimov; Best Novella, "The Word for World is Forest" by Ursula K. LeGuin; Best Novelette, "Goat Song" by Poul Anderson; Best Short Story, a tie between "Eurema's Dam" by R.A. Lafferty and "The Meeting" by Pohl & Kornbluth; Best Dramtic Presentation,* Slaughter-House 5; *Best Editor, Ben Hova (I placed third, behind Don Wollheim; this was a new category this year); Best Professional Artist, Frank Kelly Freas; Best Fanzine,* Energumen, *published & edited by Michael & Susan Glicksohn; Best Fan Writer, Terry Carr; Best Fan Artist, Tim Kirk. As of this*

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writing there has been no published breakdown on the voting, such as LACon released last year and I commented upon in my editorial in the July, 1973, issue of this magazine.
—TW

Ted White;

Just to set the record straight concerning Masao Kono's letter referring to your reported death (Jan. FANTASTIC), Ted White did indeed die in an automobile crash about three years ago and this fact was reported in *Newfangles* as he stated. The Ted White who died was a comics fan artist who had just begun appearing in fanzines, at least I only saw his work two or three times, and his work did show promise. I never knew Mr. White, but in respect for him, I thought it would be nice to get all the facts. Besides, it isn't often one can catch the Thompsons making an error. If you would like the exact issue this item appeared in, I would be less than glad to look it up for you.

JOHNNY ACHZIGER
1723 West Spofford
Spokane, Wa., 99205

Now that you mention it, I believe I heard briefly of that Ted White—a comics fan sent me a copy of his fanzine and referred to "my" art therein. I was unaware that my namesake had subsequently died, however. (This question of namesakes has plagued me for years. In the mid-forties a Canadian fan named Ted White was briefly active and attended the 1948 Torcon; when, in 1952, I heard of him I decided to use my middle initial in my fanwriting to distinguish between us, and, for the next eight or ten years signed myself "Ted E. White." For similar reasons I've never used my legal name, "Theodore", on my published work—too much chance of confusion with that fellow—what's his name again?—who used to write books about Presidential elections. I would like to hope that any future Ted Whites who enter into the sf or comics arena will find something—such as a middle initial—with which to distinguish themselves from those of us who are already around.) —TW

Dear Ted:

Either no one will pick up on that comment in the January issue, or everyone will jump on your back for saying, "Any method of criticising creative works of men with the assumption that these works are real and not fictitious is a method I'm afraid I couldn't respect." [*You've slightly misquoted me. What I said was, "Any method of criticising the creative works of men* which begins *with the assumption that these works are 'real' and not fictitious is a method I'm afraid I couldn't respect."* —TW]

Will you on second thought uphold that view?

I should think a modern classic, such as *Lord of the Rings* just for

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example, would at least be beyond technical evaluation by this date, for the novels invariably come apart at the seams when criticised on strictly technical grounds, and not much nitpiking remains to be done at any rate. But by assuming the characters, events and middle earth are all real, Tolkien's work continues to provide endless speculation and commentary without an unforgivable amount of repetition.

In the leading Robert Howard fan magazine *Amra*, a recent article dealt with the psychological aspects of Conan. In the following issue, it was pointed out by one reader that such speculation is idiotic because Conan isn't real and thus not subject to Freudian analysis. The editor hastily pointed out that it is most assuredly proper to treat fictional characters and plots as valid portions of some history. The resulting analysis can be intriguing and provide an exciting viewpoint.

To many of us fantasy freaks, it seldom enters our minds that Fahfrd, Mouser, Sparrowhawk, Conan and Bilbo are other than actual people. How can you enjoy—and actually prefer—evaluating a story under the premise of, "Ah, this isn't real."? Studying the works of men from a believers-eye-view is, I think, worthy of your respect, Ted, and I'd like to know if you're willing to reconsider your comment.

AMOS SALMONSON
box 89517
Zenith, Washington 98188

Your letter embodies several misassumptions. Let's deal with them one at a time. First, the "endless speculation and commentary" you note Tolkien's work—and that of others—generating is not "criticism." It is, like the similar "commentary" generated by Sherlock Holmes among the Baker Street Irregulars, an enjoyable mental exercise practiced by those to whom the works or characters have indeed "become real," if only in an acknowledged make-believe fashion. What is demanded first is a willing (and total) suspension of disbelief. But the comment you quote from me was evoked by the suggestion that we treat Star Trek *and* Genesis II *as "real" for the purposes of criticism. And one of my basic criticisms of* Star Trek *(I haven't seen the more recent* Genesis II*) is that its flaws in internal logic and structure make any suspension of disbelief difficult. (I am aware that most* Star Trek *fans will disagree with me on this point, but I don't regard that as a recommendation for their own intellectual abilities.) The assumption of "reality" in a fictitious work as an implicit surrender of the critical viewpoint. I don't object to this, but I do object to the confusion of this viewpoint with that of valid criticism. The "real world" operates under a complex (and none-too-well-understood) set of rules in which cause-and-effect is always in operation. The worlds of fiction are*

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the arbitrary creations of men whose understanding of reality will be variable and usually (for the purposes of their works) much simplified. Great works of fiction are those which most clearly re-create the depth and complexity of reality while offering genuine insight into its operation and effects upon men—all the while in some manner entertaining, amusing, or moving us profoundly. Still, the game of analyzing a fictional character as if he was a real person is a dangerous one—and was discredited as literary criticism in the first half of this century after the vogue for literary Freudianism died a well-deserved death. (Damon Knight tried to resurrect Freudian analysis within the context of sf criticism briefly in the late fifties—as documented in his revised In Search of Wonder*—but the combination of its inappropriateness and his superficial knowledge of Freudian theory doomed it to a quick, and largely unnoticed demise.) At best, fictional characters reflect only upon the genius (or lack thereof) of their creators. When we treat them as "real," living people, we are entering into "their" world—a fictitious world. There is nothing wrong with this, but when we try to bring them back with us into "the real world"—ah, there's the rub.*
—TW

Dear Ted,

I don't know whether you planned the January FANTASTIC as a special swords-and-sorcery issue, or if you just happened to wind up with three heroic fantasies in one issue, but whatever the case—the results were very interesting.

I might mention in passing that by my estimate, FANTASTIC has probably contributed as many fine stories to the heroic fantasy genre as *Weird Tales*, *Unknown*, and *Science Fantasy* ever did. For example—a dozen splendid Fafhrd fantasies by Fritz Leiber over a span of as many years; deCamp's *The Fallible Fiend* and "The Eye of Tandyla"; Howard's "The People of the Black Circle" (as a reprint); Davidson's "The Phoenix and the Mirror" and "The Forges of Nainland Are Cold"—not to mention John Jakes's Brak the Barbarian series, Zelazny's "Bells of Shoredan" and "Passage to Dilfar," Brunner's Traveller in Black stories, and Moorcock's "The Sleeping Sorceress" and "Masters of Chaos." Plus the deCamp-Carter Conan pastiches.

A very impressive list.

As for the stories in the January issue, I haven't started the short novel by Howard L. Myers yet, but "She-Bear" by Janet Fox was very charming and entertaining. It reminded me somewhat of the Alyx fantasies which Joanna Russ published some six or seven years ago. I look forward to seeing more of Ms. Fox and Arcana.

Your own ". . . And Another World Above," Ted, I'd rate as

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marginal heroic fantasy, but interesting in its attention to setting and characterization rather than to swashbuckling action. Having read some of your comments in the past about the typical fast-action-style heroic fantasy story, I'm not too sure that the Long Hand series will get any more swordly or sorcerous as it goes along. But like any other essentially limited genre, such as the western movie and the tough-guy detective story, the swords-and-sorcery field will have to be open to diversity and experimentation in order to survive. I hope you'll keep Long Hand going for a few more stories, at least.

I was disappointed that Fritz Leiber wasn't aboard with "Fantasy Books," this issue. I hope you'll be able to work out some way to run the features (such as the book reviews) on a fairly regular basis without hurting the present quality of the fiction. I recently noticed that you haven't featured any new installments of deCamp's "Literary Swordsmen and Sorcerers" series in over a year—not since the chapter on Fletcher Pratt in the December 1972 issue. Is the series moribund as far as *Fantastic* is concerned? I was looking forward to possible treatments of E.R. Eddison, C.L. Moore, Kuttner, Leiber, Moorcock, and deCamp himself, to mention some fairly obvious subjects.

I've been trying to locate *The Best From Fantastic* in the Washington area without much success. I spotted a copy in a book store in North Carolina in September and neglected to pick it up. When I hit the store on a return trip in late October, all copies had been sold. So far, no luck with bookstores and drug stores in Northern Virginia and Georgetown. I hope to try other bookstores in other parts of D.C. when I have the time, maybe more successfully.

All best, Ted, and keep up the good work.

FRED BLOSSER
2125 N. Pierce St. Apt. 1
Arlington, Va., 22209

Fritz is back with us this issue and will be with us—he said, crossing his fingers and knocking on wood—regularly from now on. And Sprague will also be back—he mentioned to me at the Phillycon that he plans to resume the Literary Swordsmen & Sorcerers *series shortly. (We have a Mike Nally heading waiting. . .) As for* The Best From Fantastic, *it's my suspicion that all copies of the book were shipped to North Carolina, since a bookstore in Charlotte is the only place I've seen it on sale myself. You might try writing directly to the publisher for a copy, though. The book is priced at 95¢ (and on direct orders, despite the fact that the publisher is already getting more than double the price he sells the book to his distributor for, most publishers insist on an additional 10¢ to 25¢ "for postage*

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and handling"), and its order number is 95242. The publisher is Manor Books, Inc., 329 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y., 10016. —TW

Dear Ted,

The typo in the letters section of the January FANTASTIC was the worst thing I've seen in a prozine since Gerry Conway forgot to print the end of a Harlan Ellison story in the first issue of *The Haunt of Horror*. I assume it was a printer's error, but still, how did it happen and why wasn't it caught? To construct your own, at-home, do-it-yourself, FANTASTIC-correct issue, tear out page 127-128 and tape it in backwards. I think.

The longer fiction in the issue was alright, but the short stories were pretty bad. The Russ and Malzberg stories were that funny little surprise-ending type that show up in *Galaxy* all the time. When I pay for FANTASTIC I want FANTASTIC. Ms. Doenim's story is not objectionable, but it suffers as Geo. Alec Effinger did much the same sort of thing in the Oct. issue of *Vertex*. Janet Fox's *She-Bear* was alright, but I suppose I'm too much of a male chauvanist to really appreciate it. The Bunch filler was uninspiring. Why not a *good* book review instead? The new Heinlein or Clarke exposed, perhaps. Hell, I'd even like to know what *Cap Kennedy* is doing this month.

DAVID TAGGART
Chandler Road
White River Jct., Vt., 05001

There are two unrelated errors in that letter column. One—the use of the wrong typeface in my reply to Masao Kono—slipped by our proofreader for that issue, Moshe Feder (John Berry was unavailable). The transposition of pages 127 and 128, however, apparently occurred after the proofing was done, at the point when pages are assembled into signatures for platemaking by the printer. This could have been caught on the "brown-lines" supplied by the printer just before the press-run, but only by actually re-reading the issue, something which we haven't the opportunity to do. Inasmuch as the printer repeated this error in the February issue of AMAZING, *however, we may have to find a method for checking those "brown-lines" more closely.* —TW

Dear Ted,

I found no science fiction at all in the January FANTASTIC. That's not to say i didn't enjoy the fantasy and surrealism at all, but if you're going to refrain from using sf at all in the magazine you should drop the "science fiction" from your logo and elsewhere and call the thing simply FANTASTIC Fantasy Stories or simply FANTASTIC or FANTASY.

Anyway the two best stories this issue were "Alien" and "Network." But it's two others i'd like to say something about. "The In-

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terview" was indeed Kafkaesque and a good try, but i'm afraid i guessed the "surprise" ending while reading the first paragraph of the last section ("They trained me. . ."). And "Heartburn in Heaven," compared to the amateurish, juvenile bit of almost nothing, "Timmy Was Eight," i read in your magazine not too long ago, convinces me that Susan Doenim is now trying to "improve" her writing by copying the styles of conspicuous "names" like Ellison. I was particularly struck by the big deal she made over the fact that her hero made love unashamedly to her heroine. (I suppose i should put the words hero and heroine in quotes.) Obviously she's imitating Ellison here by trying to be shocking. And she probably doesn't realize that Ellison, now a "big name" sf writer, also *tries* to shock or that this can only come out, when done the way Ellison does it and Doenim, in imitation of Ellison, does it, not shocking at all but downright boringly *bad.* Also the fact that she makes such a big thing out of the hero's naughty fornication—when most writers today treat even perversion casually—even to the extent of putting the phrase "make love" in italics leads me to believe that she actually thinks the idea of fornication will shock any present day readers; she has recently come to that stage of growing up when fornication is The Big Bad Thing Mommy Said I Shouldn't Do But Wouldn't It Be Sensational If I Did, or both.

But in your editorial this issue you finally admitted that conditions in the market force you to accept trashy stories sometimes. And, boy, "Heartburn in Heaven" certainly fit that category! However i hope you try in the future to at least exclude such adolescent "stage" fantasies as this from your mags. Let the "aspiring young writers" resolve these growing pains of theirs on their *own* time, not in the pages of your magazines. AMAZING and FANTASTIC should be places where only *mature* fiction is found, even if it means an occasional reversion to a "famous classic" from the days of long gone editors. As it is this issue had no features outside the fiction, editorial, and lettercol. A book review would 'ave done well instead of the Doenim story this time. Some of the letters were rather interesting, though, and i was struck by your reply to one of them. No offense! but the idea that *all* establishments, throughout *all* history, have been *bad* strikes me as rather paranoid to say the least!

LESTER BOUTILLIER
2726 Castiglione Street
New Orleans, La. 70119

Lester, I wish I knew what you are talking about here, but try as I have, I can't find the reply to any letter in the January issue in which I made a statement which could be construed in the fashion

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you describe in your last sentence. You'll have to cite chapter and verse. As for Susan Doenim's story, I think you've fundamentally misread it if you think she's making a "big deal" over the sex in it—or that she was trying to be shocking. She acknowledges that it was inspired by reading Ellison, but it was my impression that her intent was satirical. I'm afraid your own biases have clouded your perception of the story. (And I might add that I could as easily have published Malzberg's "Network" in AMAZING*—it strikes me as quite clearly sf and not fantasy, at least as we've defined the terms here in the past, in similar discussions of the sf content of this magazine.)* —TW

Editorial (cont. from page 120)

ing now.

Therefore, unless you do live in one of the two areas I mentioned, I'm afraid your chances for doing interior illustrations for us are fewer than for selling us a cover painting.

However, I hope this editorial has clarified both our procedures and the reasons for those procedures, and I hope it has answered most of your questions—from both artists and non-artists alike.

NOTES: From England comes the news, at presstime, that Brian Aldiss' *Frankenstein Unbound*, which concludes in this issue, has been nominated for the Booker Prize which has been described as Britain's most prestigeous prize in terms of financial reward. Naturally, we are pleased for Brian Aldiss, proud to be able to publish the novel here, and rooting for its eventual selection as the winner of the prize. It seems unlikely that this will be the only award for which the novel will be nominated.

On a less fortunate level, I must apologize to readers of our January issue for the accidental transposition of pages 127 and 128, which should be read in the opposite order if sense is to be made of them. This was apparently a printer's error, in which the pages were transposed while being prepared for printing in a signature, and subsequently misnumbered. Fortunately, the error was in our letter column and not a story. (Less fortunately, the same error—four transposed pages—cropped up in the February issue of AMAZING, in a story by Associate Editor Grant Carrington.) In both cases, our apologies to you, our readers, for these errors.

NEXT ISSUE: The long-awaited complete short novel by Richard Snead, "The Kozmic Kid"!—*and* a brand new Conan novella!

—TED WHITE

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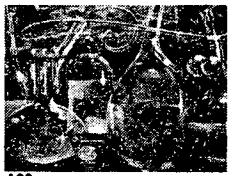

402 YOU CAN COME UP NOW, MRS. MILLIKAN

403 THE DEAR DEPARTED

404 FRIGHT NIGHT

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